

THE LIFE AND WORK OF PESHWA NANA SAHEB

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DR. HARI PRASAD THAPLIYAL

THE BOOK

The history of Peshwa Nana Rao is in fact the history of the first war of Indian Independence of 1857. Peshwa Nana organised the rank and file of the Indian masses, filled in them the spirit of liberty nationality and the sense of self sacrifice; and then waged a relentless war against the British rule in India. The British by that time had captured practically the whole of India, and were the master of land. But the Nana came forward with his dynamic personality for the rescue of the nation. At that time India looked collapsing before the tide of the British superiority in every walk of life. The Nana gave a jolt to the British Empire, and paved the way for national unity, fraternity and liberty. The magnitude and impact of the Nana's conflict and struggle was so much that the mighty British Empire, on whose domain the sun never set, appeared for the time being collapsing before the fury of the Nana and his countrymen.

In the pursuit of his great ideal, the Nana laid everything at the altar of the freedom of the Nation, and thus became the pioneer-revolutionary to take up the arms against the foreign rule. The leadership and the personality of the Nana remained glittering throughout the course of his war against the British.

Peshwa Nana did his best to revive the ancient glory and culture. He fostered the sense of brotherhood and oneness amongst his countrymen irrespective of caste, creed or colour. He devoted the image of India and of the Indians at home and abroad; and the world at large realised that the Indians were capable of armed conflict to make their motherland free from foreign yoke.

Throughout his life the Nana fought against the British and when he disappeared from the national arena, he became a legendary hero for all his compatriots in times to come.....

Thus the war of liberation of 1857 became the landmark in the history of India with Peshwa Nana Saheb as its chief architect.

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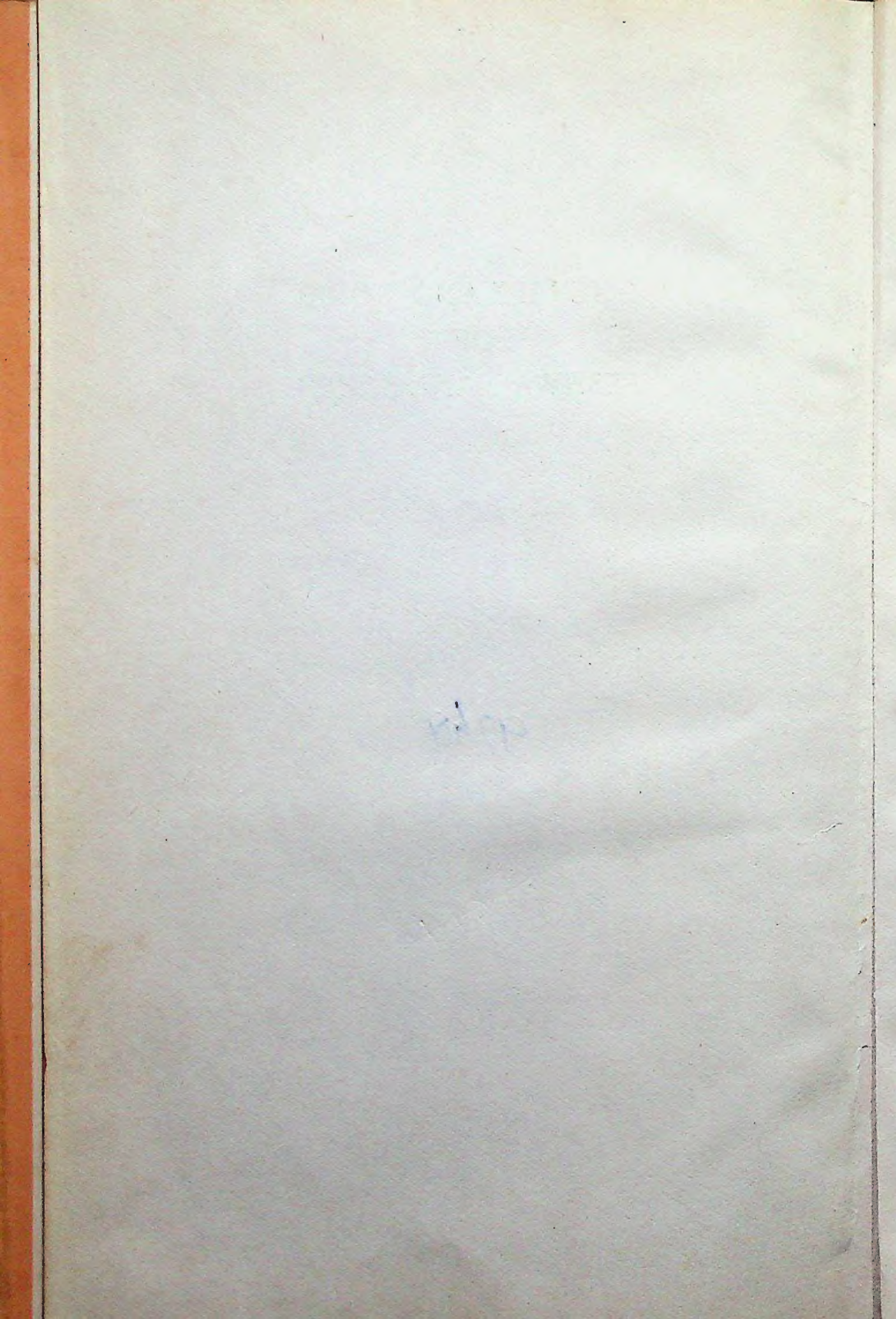


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THE LIFE AND WORK
OF
PESHWA NANA SAHEB





THE LIFE AND WORK OF PESHWA NANA SAHEB

[The Spirit and force of Indian Nationalism and National
Liberation movement in India since 1857 and onward]



Dr. HARI PRASAD THAPLIYAL

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P R E F A C E

With the advent of Independence in India, the whole socio-political and economic structure of the country witnessed a steady transformation from the old to the new. The forces of regeneration and re-organisation appeared in all walks of national life. This national awakening has necessitated the revaluation of many of the contradictory views expressed by many contemporary British writers about many events of their time. The freedom of the country now calls forth to review the introspective subjectivity of many a hitherto distorted and disputed happenings of the British period in a lucid, realistic and objective manner.

In this context the life and work of Peshwa Nana Rao popularly known as Nana Saheb Dhondu Pant, has a great significance. Truly had Carlyle written "The history of the world is the biography of the great men, who have lived and worked in it." Nana Saheb came to the forefront of the national arena in the great national uprising of 1857—which he organised and fought against the British imperialism in India. Since then Nana Saheb became a dynamic personality and national leader. It was because of his relentless struggles in the great uprising of 1857, that for a moment it appeared that the British rule in India was at an end. But Providence willed it otherwise and for a variety of reasons the national movement collapsed. But Nana Saheb never surrendered to the British and continued his 'ever lasting war of Independence' against the British. And the British on their own part declared him their bitterest enemy and presented many events of the life and work of Nana Saheb in a distorted manner.

This work attempts with objectivity and scientific detachment, to present a true account, in a historic process, of all the known and unknown facts of the life of Nana Saheb, who represented an

important period in our national history, and who organised the first people's war of 1857 from rank and file of the Indian masses and gave to the uprising a true national character. He succeeded to forge unity between the two main religious denominators of the land, and challenged the mighty British power in India, on whose empire the sun never set.

With the departure of the British from India, the bitterness and prejudice of the narrow-minded British writers, no longer exist, and so in a free and fearless atmosphere, the thinkers and the writers of the Indian History have to review many a misinterpreted fact of the British period, on the strength of documentary evidence present in the archives to treat them meaningful and real. And as such Nana Saheb's life requires re-examination and re-assessment. This is the driving force inherent in the study of this subject.

Efforts have been made to consult material from all possible sources. The National Archives at New Delhi, the National Library at Calcutta, the U.P. Secretariat Record Office at Lucknow and various libraries were visited and the records examined. Besides this, the concerned district Collectorates were visited, all valuable documents and other articles of historical use were consulted and studied.

My thanks are due to all respective authors and publishers, whose books and materials have been used as references. I am also thankful to Dr. P.N. Mukherjee for his valuable suggestions, which were very helpful to me in the writing of this book.

—Dr. Hari Prasad Thapliyal

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CHAPTER I

The Socio-Political Conditions in India During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

(1) *The Socio-political conditions in India during the first half of the nineteenth century*

The History of India during the first half of the nineteenth century is a history of gradual transition of its society, polity and culture from the medieval to modern one. This transformation was real and vital, though unwillingly enforced upon the people. This had its origin in the disembarkment of Vasco-de-Gama, a Portuguese adventurer at the port of Calicut in 1498, in his pursuit to discover the new sea-route to India. This happening heralded a new era in the relations between the East and the West. At that time the West was emerging as a power to reckon with under the influence of renaissance, new inventions and discoveries, and was heading to become a living force, shaking off everything worn out and adopting the new ones, whereas the East was on the process of decay unable to maintain its past glory and strength, it was unable to shape itself for the changed political and social circumstances to meet the challenge of the West and to change it for the better. The process was there, the silent battle was there, but the force and vitality required to generate the combined effect and will was lacking. This resulted in the victory of the West and the subjugation of the East, and India was no exception to it.

This impact of the West on the East had its own origin in the Portuguese advent in India through sea which had far reaching consequences. It mastered the sea, and drove away the Asian

contending countries and states like Turkey and the Arab-Powers from the sea trading competition and within a short span of time established its hegemony in sea and monopolised shipping. The emergence of the Portuguese as sea-power in Indian ocean brought about an end to peaceful commercial intercourse between India and West-Asian countries and dealt a striking blow to Indian export and import business and crippled the Indian shipping and industry. It had its many-sided effects. This brought to the lowest ebb the Indian maritime activity, and adversely affected its trade and commerce, the Indian 'sphere of influence' upon the South-Eastern countries like Burma, Indonesia, West-Indies and Ceylon. Gradually India's cultural relations became thinner and thinner as the Portuguese Power became dominant day by day. The Indian cultural, social and religious impact and influence, which at one time stood the test of the tide and had its complete sway in Indonesia, Burma, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, South-East Asia and Far East, became dormant and in the face of Portuguese emergence faded away to naught. This was the first defeat in the Socio-cultural field, that India sustained in the hands of a Western Power, and yet the Indian rulers did not visualise the reality and unconsciously surrendered to invisible force.

India was still living in medieval ages when a forceful and more energetic power like Portugal appeared on Indian horizon and gradually began to creep into its political economic and social fields with the aim to establish its power and oust the Indians from their colonies. The Portuguese showed the path and other European powers began to follow suit. Europe was on the path of re-emergence, it was galvanised into activity by new discoveries, and inventions. It was awakened to a new spirit by a new approach and new findings in science. The new approach in socio-political thinking laid the foundation of modernism and the ideas of social equality and political justice to every man became the keynote of all the writings in Europe. This generated a new political and social thinking and the idea of fraternity, equality, liberty and nationality governed practically every activity of Europe.¹ The

1. Hayes, Carlton J.H. "A political and cultural History of Modern Europe" (New York 1932), page 645.

nation and nationality became the knitting knot of the society and thus a complete transformation from old to new began to take shape in Europe.

The Impact of the West. Thus, Europe was in ferment, whereas India was drooping in the dark. A more forceful challenge was coming from Europe but unfortunately India did not realise the danger in the coming of these European Powers and so did not do anything to meet the challenge and when she realised the danger knocking at its door, it was already too late to remedy the situation. And what was that challenge which rocked the foundation of the socio-political structure of the Indian society? Certainly it was the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe, a socio-cultural revolution that changed the shape of Europe and like the Arabs at the time of their advent eager to spread their creed through sword, resurgent Europe was also to take its name and fame far and wide through power and pelf, through sea and sword. It became a tide and India was humbled before it.

Portugal was followed by Holland, France, and England and this process continued during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The eighteenth century India saw the full-blooded European impact.

When Portuguese ships returned to Europe laden with wealth and rich export materials, it evoked the rivalry of other European nations to follow the suit and to exploit the harvest of the Indian soil. In Netherland, France and England traders formed their companies and entered into trade with India. At that time Portugal had established itself as power to reckon with and with her trade and political gains in India and in the East Indies she maintained a far-flung empire. But when Portugal by virtue of matrimonial relations with the Spanish Crown in 1580, became an integral part of Spain and her apanage, its dominant position fell and its position became a subordinate one. Spain at the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared to have full sway in Europe and beyond as a very strong naval power, but England humbled her pride in 1588 in the great naval battle of Armeda and since then Spain began to recede to the background and England began to assume supremacy both on land and sea, in Europe and in other

parts of the world. England drove the Spanish fleet away from the sea and became a powerful Naval power. Gradually Netherland (Holland) also could not maintain pace with England in her race to Indian ocean in trade and empire and was eliminated from the field. Thus, by the middle of the eighteenth century, only England and France remained the two contenders in the field. In the first half of eighteenth century France appeared to forge ahead of England in the Deccan in her political gains. Both France and England at that time started to interfere and intervene in the internal affairs of the Deccan States and thus the third power entered the political scene in India. This was the beginning of a new era in the history of India when the Europeans, specially the French and English who came as traders tried to become a political force on the Indian soil. In this conflict France was vanquished and England emerged as victor.² England was left as the unchallenged foreign power in India to exploit the rotten conditions of that time and to enrich herself at the expense of Indian trade, commerce, industry and polity. The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 further gave a jolt to French inspirations in India and ultimately led to its exit from the arena. The British remained the only European power to reap the harvest. This was the position of Indian political scene by the close of the eighteenth century.

But during this period very important visible and invisible forces were shaping the social, economical, political, cultural, industrial, scientific and theosophical aspects of European way of thinking and living and England was also a country to witness that change. England adopted, practised and introduced them all in their national institutions and thus from a feudal society, England emerged as a nation and the factors which brought about such a vital change were in themselves very important; whereas the scientific inventions and discoveries materially altered the shape of Europe, the psychological and intellectual movement brought about a changed new outlook in the mental approach to all problems. Europe at that time was undergoing a great intellectual revolution in the field of its art, literature, political thoughts, economic conceptions, social setup and practical approach to all problems facing

2. Hayes, Carlton, J.H.—*Op. Cit.*, page 410.

the challenge of the time and traditions. New economic approach and ideas were replacing the old and even the political and administrative way of thinking was being guided by new economic way of life. Thus political theories were being advocated in the light of new economic principles. These changes brought men very close to each other and the political boundaries of the states became narrower and narrower with the inception of the ideas of nations, nationalism and internationalism.

Europe was witnessing the silent revolution at that time. The modern political thoughts roughly began with the beginning of Industrial Revolution, and found their maturity in the principles involved in the war of American Independence, and French Revolutions. No taxation without the representation, as was advocated by Americans against the British master in 1779, laid down the principle that governing and the governed must maintain their co-operation, mutual and agreeable relations with each other, otherwise there was bound to be a clash between the two. This very thinking greatly influenced the intelligentsia throughout the whole world and happened to be an eye-opener to all states that they could no longer ignore or sidetrack the issues, problems and wishes of their subjects. India was greatly influenced by these ideas.

The French Revolution gave the slogan of equality, liberty, nationality and fraternity and laid the seeds of nationalism in Europe and the nation-states (formed in the wake of Renaissance) began to take their political shapes. The idea of one nation, one people and one government became the creed of the time and India also imported these ideas through its contact with the west. Liberty and Democracy were two other very important political ideas which Europe gave to India and henceforth India, a worn out society, and divided in many castes, creeds and factions, began to realise in terms of man, mankind and humanity. This helped India to build her outlook as a nation and feelings of brotherhood ran between the Hindus and Muslims who realised that both were living under one canopy of blue sky and were drinking the same water. They had their common enemy, the British.

This was the silent psychological approach which every sane Indian started to develop and to propagate it amongst the men who were a bit literate to understand.

The social contract school of Rousseau also gave a new outlook that no one was born as governing class and no one was to remain as governed for ever. This process could be reversed and the one time governed class could take back the right of governance from its master, first by demand, and if resisted, then by force. This theory as a matter of fact for the first time filled the hope of the depressed, subordinate, dependent and slave classes of the world, that they also had a right to resist and take arms against their cruel and undesirable masters. This opened a chapter of conflict and revolution and gave people the moral right to fight for their rights. This was the beginning of a new era in the history of the new political thought and India was sensible enough to pick up this note for her own advantage and also to justify her action of revolt against the oppressions of their white masters.

Further, political thinking appeared in the intellectual classes of Europe, which became responsible for the new impetus to further the cause of the oppressed against the oppressors.

Utilitarianism, idealism, philosophical, anarchism, socialism and democracy were some of the important new schools of political thought based on a new approach and new methodology.³ Utilitarianism is inductive, pragmatic and empirical in its approach to the problems. It refutes any abstract right to any abstract man. Utilitarianism says that man is such a part of a complete society which cannot be distinguished by political barriers. So man is primarily a social being and as a man of society is motivated to action by consideration of utility. The basic urge of an individual is to seek and achieve happiness. The theory of pleasure and pain also governs the behaviour of human being in his society and state, and governs its relations with them. Every man tends to seek pleasure and avoid pains and in this process, he has even to face opposition of the state and resort to arms.

3. Hayes, Carlton, J.H.—*Op. Cit.*, page 548-49.

The state is a human agency for the promotion of general welfare, where it is absent and works for a minority section, it invites troubles in the form of revolt from the majority for itself. Thus the minority rule at the expense of the majority welfare cannot be justified to tolerate, and the majority has a right to remove minority rule even by force, if needed.

Thus a move of mental and intellectual awakening was surging throughout Europe and a slow, gradual but sure transformation of the medieval feudal society was taking place reshaping Europe to national states. So in one respect there was a marked improvement and advancement in socio-political, industrial, scientific and economic fields among nations, whereas there were also tendencies of rivalries, jealousies and reactions against each other. There scientific knowledge helped human beings to come closer to one another, the economic rivalry and the tendency of political ascendancy made developing nations face each other with a sense of contempt and inferiority. Science and literature brought about the sense of humanity and universalism; whereas economic and industrial developments widened the gap between man and the state. The competitive spirit in the field of commerce and industry generated greed for wealth and ultimately pushed the nations towards war. So, side by side, scientific growth, the economic concepts opened an era of conflicts.

Europe saw many industrial revolutions and dynastic wars—wars for the emancipation from the political and economic dominations. So when European states could wage wars, could resort to arms, then why not Indians could do the same against their white masters? This psychology gradually prevailed among the intellectual classes of India and they endeavoured to pave the way for their emancipation from the foreign yoke.

The next important factors in Europe were the clergy and the church. Religion upto the medieval period played a very dominant part in the body politics of Europe. Europe as a matter of fact was to a great extent a theocratic state, much under the direction and control of the church and the Pope. But with the outbreak of the French Revolution when Pope's power was humbled and papacy was reduced and confined only within Rome. That

gave a death-blow to the prestige and power of the Pope and since then the theocratic character of the European Catholic states diminished and full-fledged modern political states emerged after the end of the French Revolution. Religion no longer remained the governing force in politics, and its influence was limited only to religious functions. Europe saw a new era free from religious interference of the Papacy.

This trend of religious toleration had its effect in India too where Indians patched up their religious differences to become united to face a common enemy, the foreigners. This under-current of religious toleration, brought about Hindus and Muslims closer to each other and helped them to understand each other more and more. This feature forced them to make a common and united front against the aggressor, the British, with this background India was preparing itself for a final trial of strength with the British power. It is, therefore, clear that the impact of the West and the East was quite emphatic, real and vital and exhibited itself in the great national uprising of 1857.

In the eighteenth century, India lost her political power and became too weak to resist the invader. The British who had come as traders, gradually became masters of the land. An alien power with its homeland, 6,000 miles away from Indian soil ruled this vast country only because there was already complete decline in India.

(2) *Introduction of Western thoughts*

History is essentially a record of mankind that is preserved in the deeds of great men, society and nation, it is not an isolated phenomenon, but a continuous and homogenous process influenced and conditioned by environment, physical features and happenings. When West through its champion Great Britain, slowly and gradually crept into Indian society and devoured one state after another and thus ultimately swallowed the whole, then it began to exercise its influence and reaction inside India and on Indian society. It was many-sided and hence varied. It led to the rise of nationalism, a very important factor, that found favourable soil in India for its growth. India upto advent of British Power, was a country

divided into many parcels of petty estates, governed by hereditary rulers who by that time had lost their lustre and bowed to the superior skill and mind of the British, and what was that superior skill, which prevailed over India? It was the strong sense of nationalism which worked at every action of the British. A British man worked, laboured and died for his nation, whereas an Indian worked for his superior lord and laboured for himself only for the price he got for his bread and butter. His was the selfish aim, whereas the Britishers worked for that invisible undivided and ultimate sovereign which is called Nation and that was everlasting. This was the contrast which was the marked feature of any kind of self sacrifice which the Britishers had in their deeds and the sense of limited action of self preservation that was with the Indians. That is why the British gained and the Indians lost. But as soon as the Indians became conscious of their defects they were up and doing in forging a united front for the nation and the Nana was the spokesman for this cause.

The social structure of India was as primitive as before. The unit of the society was the village, and the Indian social life was a continuous combined village life, a kind of permanent socio-religious institution, with its own independent economic, cultural and religious implication. This was free from any political influence, at the centre or at states. Undisturbed and unmoved the basic Indian society was the village community, and if there ever happened any political change it had either no or little change at the bottom. Thus, Indian history presents that feature during the Sultanate Period and in the Mughal Period, and even after that. The upper stratum a structure of society was affected but the basic unity remained undisturbed. But the British were a more clever and more conscious people than their predecessors, *i.e.* the Mughals and Sultanates. They tried to reign and rule. The Mughals ruled and the emperor was the head of the state. The Britishers ruled as a race and not as a Monarch. This was the fundamental difference and Indians, who were used to be ruled by one person in the form of a monarch were alarmed when they noticed that the British interfered in every branch of administration and penetrated in every walk of life, social, political, cultural, art, literature, language, caste, creed, colour and the economic field, just as its advent

had its impact in all and one, it had its reaction to the same extent as well. The whole society rose as one man against the British rule and so we see that not the political upsurge, but socio-political, and economic upsurge became the keynote of the revolt against the British reign and Britishers in India in 1857.

So, it was the war not between the two monarchs or sovereigns but between two nations, both quite divergent in the race, traditions, culture and religion.

The caste system in India was in existence from the earliest times upto the present day. It was essentially a socio-religious order, subject to modifications according to the conditions of the society and time. It was a boon in disguise in India though at times it reflected its evils as well.

India was a prey of many foreign invaders right from the times of the Greeks upto the coming of the British power in India. The Greeks, Hunes, Kushans, Pathans, Shakas, Turks, Mangoles, and Mughals, all came as invaders, but were ultimately assimilated by the Indian culture and society and made them all a part and parcels of Indian soil. This was possible only by the super social structure based on caste system, nourished and watered by its spiritual heritage. It was because of this caste system that foreigners, though superior in arms and political power were far behind in their social and cultural spheres. So, the Indians could survive. The super-stitious pride and prejudices, the fanaticism and orthodoxy came to the rescue of Indians, because the Indians had total loyalty to their creed and system. It helped them to retain the sense of superiority and though defeated on the battle field, the Indians never accepted the foreigners as masters in their religious and social life. The Indians had blind faith in their ancestral traditions, spiritual knowledge and of their glorious past. They accepted the whole and assimilated the others in themselves. But when the British power tried to disturb their age-old faith in their society, culture and religion, the Indians opposed them tooth and nail and when the British Power resorted to arms in order to enforce their rules and regulations, the Indians resisted with the same amount of force and the national uprising of 1857 became a reality. It opened the eyes.

of the Britishers, and Nana Saheb Dhondu Pant was the pioneer in this aspect who for the first time came out from his political retirement, mixed himself with the masses, understood their desires and organised them all into a compact unit of a nation and then led the national uprising.

(3) *Social, Cultural and Political decline in India*

India was on the verge of political decline at that time. The Mughal Empire, founded by Babar in 1526 A.D. was on the verge of disintegration after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. It started losing its centripetal forces. The process of the rapid weakening of the central power began. The provincial and local authorities began to shake off the central power and started assuming independent role and began to take its shape and came into existence in due course of time. The Mughal Empire failed to preserve its integrity and solidarity and lost both its valour and virtue. Aurangzeb's policies were wrong and were mostly directed against the Hindus, Rajputs, Marathas and even against his Deccan co-religionists who followed the Sheah faith,⁴ with the decline of the Central authority, political cohesion disappeared and particularism raised its ugly head. Egoism and greed for wealth and power sharply divided the ruling hierarchy of the empire, and political factionalism, groupism and classism began to appear in the centre and provinces. Selfish tendencies and desire for immediate personal gain blinded the persons holding responsible posts in society and state and in this way the process of decline and the political vacuum started generating in the body policy of Mughal Empire.

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The weak successors of Aurangzeb could not hold the bonds of empire intact and the forces of disruption and disintegration divided the Empires and the society. The disastrous invasion of Nadir Shah of Persia in Feb., 1739 further hastened the downfall of the Mughal empire. Nadir Shah looted Delhi and humbled the then Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah. This invasion exposed the military weakness of the Mughal regime and encouraged the

4. Sarkar, J.N. "History of Aurangzeb"—(Calcutta 1922), page 259.

disrupting forces to raise their heads. One result of this invasion was the emergence of the Maratha Common Wealth into a powerful confederacy headed by the Peshwa. Marathas began to consolidate their position in south and started penetrating into the north. In due course, Nizam-ul-Mulk in Hyderabad, Aliwardi Khan in Bengal and Bihar, Marathas in Malwa, Gujarat Rajputana and Doab, and many other aspirants had established themselves as semi-independent rulers practically free from the control of the Mughals.

The growing power of the Marathas, who had by then penetrated as far as the Punjab made the Muslims in India Jealous. The Marathas were looked upon by Muslim nobles of Delhi and of other states as a potential threat to their sovereignty and existence. They even feared the complete extinction of their power in India and saw in the rise of the Marathas, Hindu revival in India. The Muslim nobles of Delhi could not tolerate it and so invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to uphold their cause and to crush the growing menace of the Marathas to the Mughals and Muslims in India.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion in India and the third battle of Panipat in 1761, proved a turning point in the history of India. Virtually it closed the history of Mughal power in India, it broke the Peshwa's power, divided the Maratha confederacy, and shattered all hopes of Hindu Empire in India. A helpless and powerless Mughal Emperor, Ali Gauhar, known as Shah Alam was nominated by the Afghan victor to the throne of Delhi. Oudh then went into the hands of Suja-uddaula as a reward for his services to the Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Hindus under Marathas, and the Muslims under Mughals lost their ground and thus paved the way for the third power to take their place. By then the French and British had established themselves in the South and in Bengal. The French power was eliminated by the British and the British were left in the field unrivalled and unchallenged to fill the power vacuum, created by the fall of the Mughals and Marathas.

Shah Alam was callously blinded in 1788 by an Afghan, Gulam Kadir and was taken under the protection in 1803 by the Britisher, who after their victory at the battle of Plassey in 1757 and Baksar in 1764 had proved themselves as the successors to the

great Mughals in India. Shah Alam died in 1806 and was succeeded by his son Akbar II (1806-37). Bahadur Shah the last Mughal emperor waged an unsuccessful war in 1857 against the British and passed his last days as prisoner, as an exile in Rangoon.

By 1856 the British had firmly entrenched themselves in India and they had washed all opposition. But unlike other invaders and the Mughals, the British did not confine themselves to attaining their domination, they ruled and governed and followed the path of slow-poisoning the Indian institutions and their way of living and thinking. The British even followed the policy of introducing christianity⁵ in India, and spreading Westernism⁶ in them too. So their rule was many sided.

The whole of the 18th century marked political upheavels in India. The Maratha confederacy was parcelled out into its constituent units with Peshwa reduced to a feeble force only limited to Poona. Holkar, Bhonsley, Sindhia and Gaikwar maintained their semi-independent positions free from the actual control of Peshwa, and even they engaged themselves against one another and thus reduced their own strength by their internal strife. It was quite evident that they were devoid of that mental, moral, intellectual calibre and far-sightedness, which was the prime need of the hour; and so they were unable to foresee the future events on the coming of Europeans in India. Instead of consolidating themselves to form a united front to meet the foreign challenge the Indian rulers and states began to look upon the French and the Britisher as their allies and even invited them to their rescue and to interfere in their internal affairs. This exposed the weaknesses of Indian Chiefs and rulers to these foreigners and they, as shrewd politicians, seized the opportunity and under the cover of help and showing themselves as well-wishers, started interfering in the internal affairs and personal matters of these states and even assumed the role of arbitrators and balancing force. The third power fully attained the acceleration and the momentum of force to their

5. Mill & Wilson. "History of British India"—Vol. VII, page 607.

6. Keith, A.B. "Speeches and Documents on Indian policy"—Vol. I, page 239-40 (London, Oxford University Press).

advantage and reduced the Indian states and their rulers one by one without giving any chance to any Indian state either to think, to prepare to manage their affairs so as to become any potential threat to their ever growing and expanding designs. The slow and gradual British ascendancy and the Indians' decadence started materialising the British dream into reality.

(4) *The Growth and expansion of British power in India*

By 1856 A.D. the British power completely established itself in India and relegated Indian opposition to the background.⁷

Clive laid the foundation of the British empire in India when he showed his extraordinary political and strategic military far-sightedness in the siege of Arcot, the capital of Carnatic in 1751, and won a decisive victory over his French rival and their Indian ally. He again showed his great diplomatic sense of understanding and correct sense-analysis and appreciation, when he successfully waged and fought the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and brought Bengal under British subjection. Mr. Warren Hastings (1772-82) added laurels to the achievements of British power in India. He further extended and expanded the British control in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and further consolidated its position in Madras and Bombay presidencies. Side by side their military victories they followed the policy of civil administration and introduced judicial and revenue reforms in their dominion on the same pattern and lines as in England. Lord Cornwallis (1786 to 1793) was the first in this direction. By the close of the eighteenth century, all the French possessions in north India and particularly in the South were eliminated for ever and Mysore, Hyderabad and the rest of the South and Bombay Presidency were brought under the complete control of the British administration.

The Maratha Chiefs remained only the shadow of their former power and the spade work was done by Lord Wellesley (1798 to 1805) to cripple their power to naught. He followed the

7. Haig, Sir Wolseley. "The Cambridge History of India"—Vol. I, page 607 (Cambridge 1937).

policy of war and conquest, and projected the establishment of British predominance in India. Lord Lake's victory at Delhi in 1803 made the person of the Mughal Emperor a shadow, a captive, in the hands of the East India Company. Wellesley then took up the imperial administration in his own hands and the authority of the Mughal Emperor became limited only within the four walls of the palace. Wellesley in his warlike designs and expansionist policy put forward his subsidiary Alliance and compelled the Indian rulers to accept it and abide by its conditions. He made Subsidiary Alliance with Marathas, Hyderabad, Mysore, Peshwa, Oudh and included within its fold many petty states, not on equal terms but placing the company as superior and guardian and the acceptors of the treaty as subordinates. By subsidiary Alliance the company rendered the princes, who accepted the treaty, as dependent on the Company in all respects. The princes could never break the Alliance, they had to provide all means and extend every facility for an increase of British military force at the expense of their resources, within their territory, upon which they had no control. The permanent presence of the British troops on the soil of the treaty-bound states made them all as semi-dependent. The Company profited in its military strength and political ascendancy without any burden on its resources and placed it at a very advantageous position.

Wellesley on coming to India as the Governor-General of India read the whole political situation in Indian and fully understood that India was a divided house in itself. He knew well that personal rivalries, jealousies and selfishness would never make them united; so he first formulated the idea of uniting all India in a league under the general direction of the Company; but when he found that factors and circumstances did not favour him to translate his idea into practical reality, he thought out another device and propounded the subsidiary Alliance⁸ which was an indirect bond of slavery for the Indian States. By this alliance the Company extended guarantee of protection to the ally states from its external enemies and internal disorders and also provided safeguard for their protection of the internal security and peace. The

8. Haig, Sir Wolseley—*Op. Cit.*, page 474-475.

foreign relations were to be guided and sanctioned only by and through the approval of the Company. The Indian treaty-bound states could not enter into any negotiation with any foreign or other Indian states independently. Thus, such states became dependent on the military support of the Company, the detachments of the Company's troops were stationed in their territories under the command of Company's government. There was to be a British Resident in each of such states, who used to look after the British interests and also served as a watch-dog of all the activities of such princes. If any prince did any act contrary to the conditions of the alliance, he was to be punished for that, and even his state could be taken over by the Company. Such state was to maintain only such military force as was sanctioned by the Resident. The Resident acted as political agent of the Company and as the *via media* between the two.

Thus, this subsidiary alliance reduced the treaty-bound states as subordinate political clients of the Company, their sovereignty divided their independence curtailed, and their size cut to limits. They had no voice of their own and could not do any act independently. This gave them the sense of security and so the Indian princes degenerated. "Eat drink and be merry", became their creed and they became completely unconcerned and unaware of all the activities inside their own states. All the lions were caged and tamed.

The subsidiary Alliance intoxicated the Indian princes to such an extent that they lost their originality and the sense of reality. They completely surrendered themselves to the Company and forgot their duty towards their subjects nation and country and thus when the privileged class of Indian princes gave up their duty then the common man turned against the princes. This alliance had its direct and important impact on India and upon its people.

When Peshwa, the titular head of the Maratha confederacy, entered into subsidiary Alliance with the Company in 1803 A.D., it became evident that Company was the only acknowledged power in India and the rest of the Indian princes were reduced to subordinate

position. Holkar, Sindhia, Bhonsla also accepted the terms of treaty with the Company.⁹

The Marathas were defeated and reduced to British vassalage and the subsidiary Alliance isolated the Indian princes from one another. Defeated and humiliated, the Marathas still had not learnt any lesson from their failure. They lost all patience to re-organise and rebuild their solidarity and image, nor could they plan a concerted action to retrieve the loss and recover their prestige. Rather the Marathas invited their own doom by their selfish policy and helped indirectly the British to become the masters of the land.

Within a decade Sindh, Punjab, Oudh, Rajasthan and central India came within the fold of British Domain and there remained none to resist the foreign aggression.

Imperialist Policy. Lord Dalhousie, the last Governor-General of the Company (1848-1856 A.D.) found the whole situation, ripe for his ambitious designs of annexation and incorporation of all the remaining Indian states to Company's domain. For this purpose he propounded "The doctrine of Lapse" and even enforced some prerogatives to supersede the existing Hindu and Muslim laws. Thereby Lord Dalhousie assumed all the powers to interpret any document or tradition only for the benefit of the Company.

Satara, Jatpur, Shambhalpur, Karuali, Baghat, Udaipur, Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed by the doctrine of lapse, Punjab was conquered and taken over, the province of Berar was forcibly snatched from the Nizam, as compensation for the money he had to give to the Company for keeping the British forces in his territory under subsidiary Alliance. The fertile and rich land of Oudh was also taken over by Dalhousie on the pretext of mismanagement and maladministration and in the interest of the common man, and was made as part of the Company's empire. All this shocked the people in general and created alarm in the minds of Native rulers. Political

9. Dr. Tara Chand—"History of the Freedom Movement in India" Vol. I (Publication Division, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India—1961)—page 228.

rumours to the effect that the British were about to annex the Rajputana states and the like; were doing incalculable harm.¹⁰ Dalhousie deprived Nana Sahib of his title of Peshwa and also stopped his pension. His other rights and duties were also taken away from him. This was an act of gross injustice on his part, for the Nana was made of that traditional stuff of Indian culture and tradition, which made him bold enough to raise his voice against British imperialism and also prompted him to take up the cause of the Indian Independence and waged a relentless war against the British rule till the last breath of his life.

Though the East India Company was able to establish its power, rule and authority in India, it was not accepted by the Indian masses peacefully. The Indian princes, Rajas, Nawabs, and other Kings surrendered their right to govern, this does mean that people as a whole accepted the right of the British and willingly submitted to their white masters to be governed by them. There was growing opposition to the foreign rule. There was a constant urge of independence in the rank and file of the common man and this desire was growing in force and momentum as the time advanced and by then it became clear that force, and nothing but force was required to drive out the foreign rule out of the country. This show of dislike and disdain was many-sided. Politically the Indians were against the British rule and socially they were very much opposed to westernisation. Though, persons like Raja Ram Mohan Rai were of the view to learn the western education in order to cut the diamond by the diamond.

The British, from the very beginning, looked down upon the Indians, as uncivil and uncultured, and so there was a gradual and continuous process of introducing the western culture and civilization in our country. Even there was the constant endeavour to enforce and generate the feelings of Christianity in India and to convert India into christendom.¹¹

British thinkers and parliamentarians thought that the people of India were so brutalized by the grossness of their superstition as

10. Kaye, Sir J.W.—“A History of the sepoy war in India” Vol. I, page 484.

11. Mill and Wilson—*Op. Cit.*, page 550.

to be incapable of any redeeming virtue.¹² They also thought the propagation of Christianity to be beneficial for India and the Indians. The Charter Act of 1813 A.D., contained the provision for the teachings of Christian religion, learning and education based on English pattern. The governing class in England considered it their pious duty to carry on an intensive and extensive missionary propaganda in India,¹³ and to give full facilities to missionaries in India and spread the gospel of Christ amongst the Indians.¹⁴ The missionaries were good social workers and teachers and they claimed that Christianity was the only way to Salvation. This greatly offended the Hindus and the Muslims both in India and a conflict between the missionaries and non-Christian masses in India gradually started in the society. There was also a class in India, who believed to learn English in order to defeat the English.

In 1833 Lord Macaulay, the Law Member of the Governor-General's council made English language the medium of instruction in colleges and thus in a way enforced English language upon Indians. This was very significant, as it opened the flood gates of western education in India and the process of westernization began to creep in all branches of life, in education, art, culture, religion, thinking, living and in all manners. Those who adopted this sort of living were looked upon with the sense of superiority and others were regarded as inferior. The conversion to Christianity¹⁵ was encouraged and the converts were made over to missionaries.

Lord Dalhousi opened his regime with feverish activity and great zeal for introducing the western reforms, inventions, scientific discoveries and way of life in India on the same scale that was in England.

The British power at home had a very clear policy about India. In all its administrative aspects, its policy was to use all resources of India for promoting the home industry and trade,

12. Ibid.—page 607.

13. Kilton, Mr. Richard. *The Indian Mutiny* (1857) p. 21.

14. Sherring, Rev. M.A. *The Indian Church, During the Great Rebellion* (London 1859) p. 184-85.

15. Mazumdar, Dr. R.C. *The Sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857*, page 249.

thereby to make all the inhabitants of England prosperous at the expense of Indian trade, commerce, industry and raw material. England used to import all raw material from India and after converting that into manufactured goods, exported the same to India, thereby gaining in both ways. India was in utter disadvantage, neither the Indians were allowed to use their own raw material nor could they build any industry of their own. England had the commercial monopoly of India. Her economic policy reduced India from an exporting country to importing one and thus reaped all the fruits for England, and deprived India of all its resources. It very badly affected Indian economy and the Indian skilled labour that formed the bulk of the common masses, became out of his own hereditary job and became poorer and poorer day by day. England's trade and industry was developing at the cost of the Indians, whereas India was drifting towards poverty and utter helplessness.

J. Shore,¹⁶ has rightly said that the fundamental principle of the English had been to make the whole Indian nation subservient in every possible way to the interests and benefits of English man. The Indians had been excluded from every honour, dignity or office which the lowest Englishman could be prevailed upon to accept. Indians were not allowed to take any responsible posts in the Company's administrative machinery.

(5) *Direct and Indirect influence of the British rule in India*

The Company adopted the divide and rule policy. Zamindars and intermediaries were given some privileges and the poor cultivators were reduced to utter misery and were placed at the mercy of the big zamindars, who exploited them at their will and benefited themselves at their cost. As a matter of fact there was no direct touch between the rulers and the ruled. The land and the land revenue was administered on western lines and land was converted as property of the privileged class. Thus the British divided the Indian society into many classes on economic basis and unknown to the Indians and inculcated a feeling of class hatred and class.

16 New York Daily Tribunes, June 25, 1853 (Article "The British Rule in India" by Karl Marx).

struggle. India was at that time governed by force¹⁷ and that force was characterised by racial discrimination and intolerance. Indian society would always remain a divided house in itself. They did every thing to disrupt the social and cultural unity of India.

The policy of introducing Western nations into Indian way of living produced the middle class, as a new class in itself, that was very sensitive and conscious of their legitimate rights, and this middle class was responsible for spreading national feelings and intense desire of emancipation from the foreign rule and also it was responsible for inculcating the national liberation movement in India in due course. The British masters and the missionaries ridiculed the rites and practices of the Indian society which greatly offended the Indians.¹⁸

The old village organisation was disintegrated and the rural society badly snapped, rural economy underwent fundamental changes, giving major share of profit to rulers and less to ryots. India was called upon to bear the cost of British conquests and administration of the company and all its resources were used and utilised by and for the British. Thus the British fiscal policy and land system destroyed the ancient institutions and the rural organisation, under which the Indian village community and personality lived for centuries. The shell which had protected the social organisation, from all external influences was broken and the way was opened for the establishment of a society organised on the basis of private property individual enterprise, accumulation of capital and technological progress.¹⁹ The British land policy and taxation measures caused serious harm to rural economy.²⁰

With the establishment of Company's rule and power in India, the trade and business of the country had passed into the hands of the foreigners. The result was that the artisans and producers of the country became subordinate to and dependent of their white

17. Russell, Sir W.H., *My Indian Diary* (London 1959).

18. Sen, Dr. S.N. "Eighteen fifty seven" page 9 and page 16.

19. Dr. Tara Chand. *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, page 307.

20. Dutt, Mr. R.C. *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, page 218.

masters and were left at the mercy of foreign merchants. This made the home trade of the Indians very poor. England on her own part adopted the protectionist policy for safeguarding her trade and commerce after 1813 A.D. It drained the Indian economy very badly and India being a dependent country could not stand in trade and commerce in the competition with the West in general and Great Britain in particular. In this connection Karl Marx points out that the low-prices of the English Machine made goods destroyed the spinning and weaving industries.²¹ The sea power was also as much responsible for the political subjugation and dependence of the country as industrial decline. India could never frame out a national policy, it lacked political cohesion and economic uniformity.

Dalhousie very greatly improved the old and constructed new means of communication and transport inside the whole country. He also constructed a network of railways in India, connecting all its ports with each other. It united India politically and promoted and encouraged internal trade and commerce as well. This facility in communication and railways also helped in erecting industrial units and manufacturing goods. These roads, railways and industrial growth inside the country gave a new motion to society and gradually and silently generated a social change. This social change accelerated political consciousness and slowly and surely convulsed the political situation which erupted in the national uprising of 1857.

(6) *Modernization of Europe and its influence on Indians*

Whereas it is seen that England had its direct impact on the course of Indian history during the period of its rule and administration, it is also very clear that the events, happenings and social, political or economic revolutions of Europe, greatly influenced the Indian society and its intellectual class. Whereas England as master of India had a superiority complex, Europe proved a friend, philosopher and guide to Indians in their desire of emancipation from the foreign rule.

21. Marx, Mr. Karl—A critique of Political Economy, Vol. III, p. 392.

When educated Indians learnt and studied western history and culture, they came to know of many things, which were unknown to them, till then. England had the parliamentary form of government where monarchy was only decorative, and all the people were directly or indirectly associated with the working of the government. They had their own voice and could appreciate and criticise the government too. That liberty was absent in India. In the British revolution of 1640-48, in which a civil war was fought between the Parliament representing the people and the King advocating and defending the Divine rights of Kings, England's King Charles I was defeated and executed. Another bloodless revolution, that of 1688, took place in which too the King James II was forced to abdicate the throne and victory to the people over the King was assured. These two events of British history greatly influenced the educated classes of India and inspired them to fight for their rights against the foreign rule of Great Britain.

The war of American Independence (1776 to 1783 A.D.) opened a new chapter in the history of the world, in which the principle of the nation's right of independence was recognised and the slogan of "No taxation without representation" was upheld in the conflict. This paved the way for democracy and also opened the gates for other nations to rise to the occasion and to fight for their right. This revolution greatly inspired the Indian feelings and sowed the seeds of national desire, which began to promote democratic set up in India too. This war of American Independence was a source of inspiration to all the oppressed people of the world. The stubborn fight for self government and dominion by the Irish people, a constituent part of Great Britain, also filled the hearts of many Indians with the same zeal and fervour for independence.

Simultaneously with these political revolutions the silent intellectual revolution throughout Europe was taking place. There were many scientific inventions and discoveries of great scientists like Sir Isac Newton, Buygenes, Gallileo, Descarles and many men of national knowledge and wisdom. The quest conception of metaphysics was evolved in this period. It was a substitution of national science for theology which became the basis of metaphysics. This period also saw the age of great political philosophers, like

Karl Marx, Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, Locke, Barkeley, Hegal, Hume and many others.

These scientific and political philosophies greatly changed the outlook of the society, particularly in the field of religion and traditions and made the society to think more in terms of realism, nationalism and practicality.

In the closing days of the eighteenth century, France was undergoing the great intellectual change. Voltaire was a great sceptic and deistic of the age. He was the apostle of liberty and humanism. He believed in natural science, in human reason and in human perfectibility ; without any distinction between man and man, between slave and master and between the governing and the governed. Another great French philosopher was Montesquieu, who believed in human rights and worked out political institutions and laws. He also promoted the feelings of liberty and humanism. Rousseau, another great French thinker, was also of the same thinking as his contemporaries. He was a pioneer of political romanticism, and was a man of Nature. Rousseaus great saying "man was born free, but everywhere he is in chains" sharply revolutionasied the social thinking of the world. The great social contract theory advocated that men, in a state of nature, have voluntarily made with one another a social contract which the people and society may change at will, when it is seen that the man in power is not acting for general welfare and thus Rousseau openly advocated revolution against a tyrant and autocratic despot. He justified revolution, when it was waged for attaining personal liberty and independence of a nation.

It armed the society with a weapon hitherto unknown and it heralded the Great French Revolution of 1789 A.D. This great Revolution shook the whole of France from its foundation and surprised the whole world. France was emancipated from Monarchy and an era of enlightenment came with the message of fraternity, liberty and equality to all the nations of the world.

India was also much affected by the French Revolution. Indians began to think themselves as a nation, they aspired for liberty and worked for fraternity. They thought that they should

have political freedom and were united by a common bond of slavery under the British.

India like other nations of the world was determined to realise her lost independence and a constant war was waged between the rulers and the ruled till it reached its climax in 1857 A.D.

It was a universal truth that social and class consciousness was slowly appearing in all those societies where modernization and industrialization had taken place. The superior race concept was gradually vanishing and nation and nationalism was developing in its place. The cultural and traditional bonds became invisible and geographical boundaries and limitations began to be recognised as the dividing line of all the political societies, which within their geographical boundries came to be known as nations. Economic considerations came to the fore-front, and became the points of conflict in all social and political disputes, and sometimes economic disputes assumed great magnitude. A sharp line of distinction appeared in all upheavals in society. The eighteenth century saw the political rivalries and antagonism, whereas the nineteenth century witnessed the economic factors, at the root of practically every discontentment ; this was more true of England, where the social structure was undergoing a capitalistic transformation and conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat between the industrialists and workers and between privileged and unprivileged classes crystalised.

Industrialisation brought to the fore front the economic considerations as the mian issue of life, and thereafter the social system began to be interpreted in terms of economic factors. Karl Marx, the father of socialism, had by then interpreted the dialectical materialism of history. He advocated that matter is primary and it is the source of sensation and ideas. Mind is secondary and it is the reflection of matter. He said that thought was the product of matter. Marx advocated that material being of society is primary and spiritual life is secondary, and material being of society is an objective reality. Marx said that contrary forces are always present in history and in fact constitute the moving force of history. He

said that capital was the thesis and labour was its anti-thesis, and so there was bound to be a clash and hence class-struggle.

This philosophical materialism greatly influenced the course of history during the nineteenth century and brought about many social and political upheavals in Europe and in England. England was an industrial country and so it had many problems of labourers and workers. The condition of workers working in factories in England was very bad and there had been violent labour riots at many places. There was much discontent in the society in England due to high cost of living. The British society was sharply divided between the capitalist who had amassed vast wealth and had gained political power in the administrative machinery both in England and India and in the poor masses. This upper class, the privileged class or the capitalist class in England was conservative and reactionary and viewed the Indians in a very unsympathetic way and always thought to suppress the Indians rather than find out an amicable or agreeable solution. This psychological antagonism on the part of the British and an equal amount of reaction on the part of the Indians against the British, was also the cause of dissatisfaction which ultimately brought them both at daggers drawn.

So the class struggle was inevitable. It was a continuous phenomenon, formerly in a slow pace, between the ruled and the rulers, between the oppressors and the oppressed and this slow struggle ultimately assumed the form of the war of liberation of 1857 or the emancipation of the Indians from the hands of the foreign masters.

The unwarranted interference²² with the social and religious practices of the Indians gave offences to them. The abolition of Sati, the remarriage of Hindu widows,²³ the 'clean-shave circular' for jails, agitated the Hindu society.²⁴ The Muslim population was equally disturbed by the social and religious reforms of the British regime.

22. Edwards and Merivale—Life of Sir Henry Lawrence (London 1875, Vol. I, pp. 322-23.

23. London Times, July 24, 185 .

24. The Friend of India, April 2, 1857, pp. 3-8.

The economic exploitation was not confined to trade, industry and to the merchantile interests only, but it touched all other aspects of our economic life. "The Europeans, by the introduction of English articles into India have thrown out of employment all classes of people and have reduced the native artisans to beggary.²⁵ Mr. Thomas Lowe wrote in 1860 that the resources of India have been permitted to lie as they did a thousand years ago and decay." During these days the agriculture of the country was ruined,²⁶ and the conditions of the Ryots was worse. The Zamindars were also dissatisfied and were badly affected by the British revenue settlement and administration.²⁷ It asked the holders of the lands of various kinds to establish their proprietary title or in case of failure to forfeit their possession. Most of them failed and lost their titles.²⁸ So the land policy of the British government was a thorn in the economy of India. So the land and the revenue policy of the Government generated discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the masses. It was a complete failure in so far it failed to restore confidence in the Ryots and Zamindars.²⁹

The usually prevailing common grievances were reinforced in the case of sepoys by a feeling of bitter discontent aroused by many factors. Since long the sepoys mind had become prone to suspicion and had developed bad faith against the British. There is in the National Archives a Paper, which tells us that in 1824, the actual pay of the Sepoy, after all sorts of improper reduction was Rs. 6/11/-.³⁰ The bribery within the government machinery was rampant³¹ and caused great inconvenience to the common man.

25. The Friend of India—7. Oct., 1857.

26. The Agra Ukht ar, 5th February, 1845 (copy of an address made to His Honour J. Thomason, Lieut. Governor Agra sent to the Editor for publication).

27. Friend of India, April 16, 1857. pp. 370-71 also Hindoo Patriot, April 30, 1857. page 140-41.

28. Powell, Mr. Bandan, 'Land System of British India.' Vol. III, page 302.

29. Foreign Political Consultations, 24th April, 1857, Nos. 164 National Archives, New Delhi.

30. Military Department Miscellaneous Records, Misc. No. II of November 16, 1824.

31. Foreign Department, Persian letters Received, 20 June, 1857, No. 295 and December 30, 1856, No. 703.

There was the maltreatment³² of the sepoys at the hands of British military officers, which often erupted in violence at punctuated intervals at different places in India, namely, the mutiny of the 25th Regiment in 1722 ; that of the 15th Battalion in 1795 ; the Vellore mutiny in 1806, that of the 47th Bengal Native Infantry in 1824 ; and that of the 34th Native Infantry in 1844. The commanding officers of various units and specially in the Bengal Army had lost their hold on the men, they commanded, "generally speaking they had little or no influence with these men."³³ The promotions were not for the Indian soldiers and they were ill-paid. There was great annoyance prevailing with the native soldiers, about the great disparity in the pay. Even there was great difference in pay in Bengal Army and Madras Army. "It is clear that in no service of the world is the soldier required to contribute so much towards his equipments"³⁴ was the verdict of the court on the 31st December, 1824.

In a nutshell, the queer situation was there. The peasantry was ruined, the old industries were spoilt, the new system of industrialisation became absolutely the monopoly of the foreign masters, the administration was corrupt, the soldiers were greatly annoyed, the religious feelings of the country were badly hurt, politically the country was greatly exploited, and above all the British had little or no regard for India and the Indians and were busy hunting their own ground.

32. Norgate, Lt. Col. and Phillott, Lt. Col. D.C. "From Sepoy to Subadar" (Calcutta 1911), page 14.

33. Military Department, Miscellaneous Records No. 11. (Proceedings of a special court of Inquiry of Nov. 16, 1824, at Barrackpur).

34. Military Department, Miscellaneous Records No. 11, p. 501.

CHAPTER II

Peshwa Baji Rao II A Brief Sketch of his Reign his Written Testament and his Death

PESHTWA BAJI RAO II

(1) *A brief sketch of his reign*

“The Marathas produced rulers and statesmen, soldiers and generals, judges and financiers, poets and writers, patriots and saints. They fought and conquered and often suffered terrible reverses which they bore coolly and patiently..... We can find in Maratha history such brilliant names in various professions such as Peshwas....., who have illumined Maratha history with unforgettable achievements..... and gave India inspiration and hope, driving away the gloom which had overcome all by supplying a practical lesson that even mighty kings could with success be resisted in their evil actions.....¹

Shivaji, the founder, and the moving spirit and force of Maratha resurgence and renaissance, died in 1680 after establishing an edifice on a solid rock on which later Peshwas built the magnificent Maratha Empire. His son Shambhaji was done away with very cruelty by Aurangzeb in 1689. Then followed the Maratha war after their survival and existence against the Mughal Emperor till the last breath of Aurangzeb's life in 1707. After Aurangzeb's death events took a sharp turn and the period of decline and decentralisation followed. Shahuji, the son of Shambhaji, who was

1. Sardesai, G.S. Main currents of Maratha History (Calcutta 1926), page 181-82

taken away as prisoner by Aurangzeb got himself released from the clutches of Mughals and managed to reach his homeland in 1707. He regained his freedom and assumed the title of Chhatrapati and settled down at Satara as an independent ruler.

Shahuji led a very simple, honest and self-centred life, isolating himself within his domain and place and leaving all powers and functions of the government in the hands of Peshwas. In due course this greatly reduced the authority of the Chhatrapati and made Peshwas all powerful,—virtually sovereign. A civil war divided the dynasty of Shivaji into two houses, the superior and legitimate line was of Shahuji and his descendants at Satara, and the other, the descendants of Raja Ram, the younger son of Shivaji, at Kolhapur.

The first Peshwa was Balaji Vishwanath, who very faithfully served his master and died in harness in 1720. He was succeeded by his elder son Baji Rao I, who was appointed Peshwa by Chhatrapati Shahuji after the death of his father. Baji Rao I also very ably served the people and kingdom and after a successful twenty year's reign died in 1740. He was also succeeded by his eldest son Balaji Baji Rao, who became the third Peshwa. He was given the robes of Peshwaship by King Shahuji and was invested with all the powers and privileges which his predecessors enjoyed. Balaji Baji Rao lived upto 1761 and carried the administration of the state to the best of his capacity. But he received mortal blow in the third battle of Panipat in 1761, when the Maratha armies were defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Peshwa lost his eldest son Vishwas Rao and his cousin Sadashiva Bhau in this battle. The effect of the battle was so disastrous that it shattered his physical and mental condition and the Peshwa died on June 23, 1761.

Madhav Rao I then succeeded his father on the latter's death in 1761. Madhav Rao I was only of 16 years of age at the time of his accession. His uncle Raghunath Rao was made regent and the young Peshwa under his uncle's regency began to conduct the administration.

Narain Rao, the younger brother of late Peshwa Madhav Rao, and the third son of Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao, succeeded his



PESHTWA BAJI RAO II
'The Adoptive Father of Nana Sahab'



NANA SAHEB

This picture has been published by
the Chitrashala Press, Poona.

elder brother in 1772, but he could not survive long and was assassinated on August 30, 1773.² It was the palace mutiny planned by Raghunath Rao.³ After it was successful, Raghunath Rao, popularly known as Raghov, then managed to proclaim himself Peshwa. But it lasted for a very short time. In the mean time Ganga Bai, the widow of Peshwa Narain Rao, gave birth to a posthumous son on April 18, 1774. The child was then proclaimed Peshwa, when only forty days old, and was given the name and title as Srimant Sawai Madhav Rao Narayane. He ably served his state and people faithfully when at the age of twenty one the young Peshwa after a brief illness died on October 27, 1795, without having any male issue to succeed him.

The only surviving male members of the Peshwa family were now the three sons of Raghunath Rao. Amrit Rao was the adopted son and Baji Rao and Chimnaji Appa were his two natural sons. The internal intrigues first placed the younger brother Chimnaji Appa as Peshwa with the support of Nana Fadnevis, but he remained in office for only five months. He was deposed and was succeeded by his elder brother Baji Rao II, in 1796, who proved the last Peshwa of the Maratha confederacy, and with the death of Baji Rao, the curtain was drawn on the scene and with the appearance of the Nana on the scene of Peshwaship in Brahmavirta, a new chapter was written, that was full of life and vigour in Indian History.

Baji Rao was the eldest son of Raghunath Rao. He was born in 1775. His younger brother's name was Chimnaji Appa, who was born in 1784. The childhood days of Baji Rao were spent in unstable and disturbed conditions, because his father Raghunath Rao was very unpopular with his people. He was in authority and position of Peshwahood from October, 1773 to February, 1774. After that Raghunath Rao was deposed on charge of having direct hand in the murder of Peshwa Narayane Rao, according to the findings of Ram Shastri, the Chief Judicial head of the state.⁴ In order to avoid the punishment and the wrath of his

2. Sardesai, G.S. *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, page 26.

3. Poona Gazetteer, page 407.

4. Sardesai, G.S., *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, page 23. The version of Mohammad Yusuf is that "there was no plot or intention to murder the Peshwa. Their object was only to put him in confinement."

people, Raghunath Rao fled from Poona and became a fugitive for eight long years. Raghunath Rao was a power-hungry man. When he found that he would not be able to secure the throne of Peshwahood for himself by his self efforts, he sought the help and intervention of the British power in India. This resulted in the internal war between Marathas from 1774 to 1782.

It was under these circumstances that the child Baji Rao received the first lessons of life and books. Raghunath Rao got reverses after reverses, then he became a forlorn and a desperate man and at last unequivocally surrendered himself and his family to Poona⁵ authorities about the middle of July, 1783. Self mortified, Raghunath Rao, after his reconciliation, went to Nasik to pay his respects to his sister-in-law Gopika Bai, the widow of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao and the mother of late Peshwa Narain Rao to re-express his repentance and to obtain her blessings. Gopika Bai was greatly respected and revered by the whole of Maharashtra. She was at that time leading a pious life near Nasik. Raghunath Rao performed the rites of penance in the presence of a body of priests, after this the pious lady bestowed her blessings on him and forgave him and his family. It was because of her forgiveness and her blessings that Raghunath Rao's family and his sons Baji Rao and Chimnaji Appa were able to regain their lost respects in Poona and in Maharashtra. This also enabled Baji Rao to become Peshwa after many vicissitudes on the death of his father in 1783.

At the time of the death of Sawai Madhav Rao Narain,⁶ struggles and intrigues began amongst the powerful personalities of Maharashtra. Nana Fadnavis, the most influential minister at Poona was the moving figure behind all those activities, who had no liking for either Baji Rao or for Chimnaji Appa, but other ministers did not like the idea of Nana Fadnavis⁷, for they thought that when

5. Poona Gazetteer, page 408.

6. Sardesai, G.S., New History of the Marathas. Vol. III, page 31-32 (Bombay 1948).

7. Colonel Palmer, the then British Resident at Poona, in his report to the Governor General wrote about Nana Fadnavis that with his death in 1800, departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Marathas Government.

these were eligible male members in the family of the Peshwas there was no need to bring in a new family. Then Nana Fadnavis manipulated the adoption of Chimnaji, then a lad of eleven years of age by Yashoda Bari the widow of late Peshwa Sawai Madhav Rao Narain. Though for the moment Nana Fadnavis appeared to have succeeded, this move was opposed by the majority of the ministers. For, Baji Rao in every way was eligible and could not be allowed to be superseded by his younger brother. Baji Rao at that time was twenty years of age. He was active, young and energetic, and all had high hopes of him. Most of the powerful ministers gathered to undo the wrong done to Baji Rao and they resorted to action. On October 27, 1796, Chimnaji Appa was deposed and taken prisoner and Baji Rao was installed as Peshwa on December 5, 1796. After his investiture with the robes of office, he marched in procession through the city of Poona to take his abode in the ancestral residence in the Shaniwar Palace there. He is known in history as Baji Rao II, the first being his grand father who was the second Peshwa during 1720-1740.

The reign of Baji Rao II was full of many events and deeds. On becoming Peshwa he set free all those who were close adherants of his father, and who were punished for their being followers of Raghunath Rao by the previous government. This created great discontentment among the people, and resulted in mal-administration.

Being full of youth and vigour, Baji Rao II was a highly religious man as well. He always offered prayers, and worshipped all deities of Hinduism. He had deep faith in religion and in all religious rites and duties. Daulat Rao Sindhia was his close friend and benefactor in his youthful days. He was a man of learning and eloquence. Baji Rao sincerely wished to devote himself to the service of his people, but unfortunately he was the victim of circumstances. The odds were against him. He was the son of a man (Raghunath Rao) who was believed to be the murderer of his nephew, the young Peshwa Narayane Rao.

Baji Rao was greatly obliged to Daulat Rao Sindhia for advocating his case and elevating him to Peshwaship.⁸ His another

8. Sardesai, *G.S. Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, page 333.

close adviser and friend was Sharze Rao.⁹ He was looked upon by people as an evil person. These two persons exercised their influence on Baji Rao adversely and the result was also not good, which ultimately proved to the cause of his failure.

Baji Rao had great dislike even hatred for Nana Fadnavis, whom he regarded as principal opponent of his late father and also himself in his Peshwaship. At the end of 1797 Baji Rao arrested Nana Fadnavis and placed him in solitary confinement; out of vengeance.

Daulat Rao Sindhia demanded money and financial help as price for his valuable help, but Baji Rao was hard pressed for money and was not in a position to give money to Sindhia. He knew that Nana Fadnavis had vast treasure estimated at several crores, so he decided to allow Sindhia to exploit Nana Fadnavis treasure, and for this he even gave him written permission. Daulat Rao and his associate Sharze Rao promptly acted on the permission, and ruthlessly snatched away vast money from Nana Fadnavis. This gave Daulat Rao much needed money to raise his army and consolidated his position, but this also generated a feeling of vengeance and strong opposition to Daulat Rao and a feeling of resentment against Baji Rao himself, for Nana Fadnavis was still looked upon with great respect and honour amongst the high dignitaries in Maharashtra.

The vast wealth, the strong armed strength and the close and intimate relation of Daulat Rao with Peshwa, greatly increased his prestige and influence in the Poona court in particular and whole of Maharashtra in general. This aroused the jealousy and rivalry amongst Maratha confederacy; and Sindhia and Holkar were soon at daggers drawn with each other. The case of this animosity between these two great Maratha Chieftains was more personal than political.

Tukoji Rao Holkar died in his camp at Poona in 1797. He had four sons. Kashi Rao, Malhar Rao, Vithoji Rao, and

9. *Ibid*, Vol. III, page, 33-37.

Yashwant Rao. After the death of their father the sons started manipulation for the succession by force. Kashi Rao with the contrivance of Daulat Rao Sindhia secured the succession to which he was entitled, being the eldest born. This united the other three brothers, and they formed an alliance between themselves and proclaiming Malhar Rao as the heir apparent to their father, they gathered their own army and made preparations to attack and capture Kashi Rao. When Daulat Rao learnt the moves of Holkar brothers, he sent his army, attacked Malhar Rao and in the engagement that followed, killed him as well. This greatly infuriated Vithoji Rao and Yashwant Rao. They resorted to a hide and seek war with Sindhia and took to the life of brigands. Both collected and organised their own army and they separately and jointly attacked, devastated and plundered the vast territories of Sindhia and Peshwa Baji Rao. Vithoji became a terror to Baji Rao, who declared Amrit Rao, the adopted elder brother of Baji Rao as the legitimate Peshwa and further declared that Baji Rao was incompetent and worthless. He caused great havoc in the Peshwa domain.¹⁰

Baji Rao organised his armies and sent his force against Vithoji. The Peshwa forces pursued Vithoji's army, and ultimately in April, 1801 Vithoji Holkar was captured and brought in chains before the Peshwa, who in a fit of revenge and insane rage ordered the captive to be punished by being trampled under the feet of an elephant. This was usually the punishment in those days for high treason.¹¹ Vithoji was tied to the feet of an elephant and was dragged about in the palace compound and was killed with horrified cruelty. The Peshwa was determined to take full revenge unmindful of the consequences.

Yashwant Rao Holkar was at that time at war against Sindhia; but when he learnt of the brutal murder of his brother by the Peshwa his anger knew no bounds. But he showed patience and at first sent words to the Peshwa for mediation and intervention in the dispute between him and Sindhia. Yashwant Rao upto that

10. Sardesai, G.S. *Op. Cit.*, Volume III, page 364-65.

11. Sharma, S.R., "Making of modern India". (Calcutta 1951), page 292.

time regarded the Peshwa as common master and Chief of Maratha confederacy. He, in order to achieve peace and settlement, went to the extent of forgetting the tragic fate of his brother at the hands of the Peshwa, but Bajī Rao did not accede to his demands, and remained indifferent to his entreaties. Daulat Rao Sindhia was very much suspicious of the growing power of Yashwant Rao Holkar and he wanted to nip in the bud the power and prestige of Holkar once and for all. He instigated the Peshwa to confiscate the whole estate of Holkar. Bajī Rao acting on the advice of Sindhia, ordered his army to march against Yaswant Rao and to do away with him by force. When Yaswant Rao learnt of the designs of the Peshwa he lost all hopes of peace and made all preparations to meet force by force. He marched with all his strength against Daulat Rao Sindhia and defeated him completely. He then attacked the Peshwa's Territory and fought a bloody battle with Peshwa at Hadapsar, which was a village near Poona; and the battle was fought on the plains of that village. Yaswant Rao defeated the combined armies of the Peshwa and Daulat Rao Sindhia. He then captured Poona, plundered it completely and inflicted a crushing and humiliating defeat on both his adversaries.¹²

(2) *Bajī Rao and his treaty with the British*

Peshwa Bajī Rao fled from Poona to Bassein. He begged for English help and protection in order to regain his lost territory. Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of India, promptly seized the golden opportunity to fish in the troubled water of Maharashtra. He was eager to bring Maratha power within the fold of company's domination. So he agreed to the Peshwa's request, who had personally reached the port of Bassein, a Maratha out-post near Bombay. Lord Wellesley agreed to provide British help if the Peshwa would accept a subsidiary force such as the Nizam had received and accept the terms of Subsidiary Alliance and English mediation in his disputes with other Indian princes. Bajī Rao had no option but gave his consent to these terms, and eventually on December 31, 1802, signed the treaty of Bassein.¹³

12. Haig, Sir Wolseley—The Cambridge short History of India, page 472.

13. Sardesai, G.S.—*Op. Cit.*, Volume III, page 366.

The treaty of Bassein is very important as it established British influence at the very heart of the Maratha confederacy.¹⁴ The treaty gave power to the British to protect Baji Rao's territory as their own, and to station a subsidiary force permanently at Poona with a Resident to look after the interests of the British at Poona darbar. To meet these expenses the Peshwa gave such territory that was to yield a revenue of twenty six lacs a year. This was a great loss of land, money and prestige to the Peshwa. Moreover, the English control at Poona would deprive the Maratha Chiefs of their common rallying point. The great common bond of cohesion, integrity and unity was broken and the process of disintegration started.

The treaty was not accepted by other Maratha Chiefs with calm. They considered the treaty of Bassein as a direct blow to Maratha prestige and power and a great humiliation to all. Peshwa Baji Rao also did not like the terms of the treaty at the bottom of his heart. He was forced by circumstances to accept the treaty for his existence ; just as he regained his position he tried to undo the wrong and consolidate the Maratha Chiefs under his leadership. He tried to form a combination but Holkar was very much displeased with Baji Rao and he refused to co-operate with the Peshwa. He withdrew sullenly to his possessions in Malwa. The Gaekwar too refused to participate and act in cohesion in any scheme of the Peshwa, whom he feared in the same degree as he feared the British.

Daulat Rao Sindhia and Bhonsla responded to the wishes of the Peshwa and advanced with their armies towards Poona, but Lord Wellesley was wise enough to anticipate their moves and he at once sent British force to meet their challenge. Both Sindhia and Bhonsla were defeated separately and jointly by British troops and both were obliged to accept the terms of treaties dictated to them by the British. Thus the Maratha confederacy was completely reduced. In the north, Sindhia lost his hold in Delhi and also relinquished his protectorate over the Mughal emperor. Delhi had then been taken by the British and the Mughal emperor had passed from the protection of the Maratha to British custody.¹⁵ This was

14. *Ibid.* Volume III, page 393-94.

15. Haig, Sir Wolseley. *Op. Cit.*, page 473.

the signal for further catastrophies for India and the Indians. Marathas invited their own doom by their own internal enmity. Lord Wellesley by his cunning diplomacy gave the impression that it was the Marathas who invited the British and not the British who intervened into internal affairs of the Peshwa and his chiefs. Before capturing Poona, the British had issued an appeal to the inhabitants of that territory, that :—

“The Peshwa Baji Rao has sought the friendship and protection of the Company’s government. It is at his invitation that we are entering the Maratha country as friends. We have no desire to harm any body. We call upon all officials to join us cordially. We are stationing our guards to see that no damage is done to any peaceful member of society.....”¹⁶

Lord Wellesley in his personal appeal declared that, men serving the Indian chiefs were told that if “they joined the British army they would be treated with respect and attention without any distinction on racial grounds and with a guarantee about emoluments. These tempting and elusive attempts of the British paid rich dividends to them, and they reaped good harvest.

Peshwa Baji Rao felt secure against internal as well as external dangers due to the presence of British subsidiary force, stationed at Poona. But he felt mortified and humiliated. He felt himself like a bird in a cage. But he was helpless. He had already lost grandeur and dignity and was reduced to mere shadow of his former self.

In spite of all these drawbacks and limitations Peshwa Baji Rao maintained his position and spirit according to former high standards. The etiquette of his court was fine and befitting his exalted position. Peshwa Baji Rao used to dress himself with plain white dresses. Peshwa’s Shaniwar palace was fairly handsome building and was very neat and clean. The Darbar room was large and was supported by handsomely carved wooden pillars. The state cushion was of white muslin, richly embroidered in gold and coloured silk, the Peshwa’s attendants stood round outside the

1 . Atcheson’s “Collection of Treaties Engagements and Sanads” (Calcutta 1892), page 160.

pillars, as guards for the internal security. Peshwa used to perform his religious performances very sincerely and faithfully. He was a God fearing man. He used to entertain the foreign visitors with great courtesy and modesty and he also used to exchange presents with high dignitaries befitting the rank and position of the visitors.¹⁷

Baji Rao was not happy with the British. Frequent frictions between him and the British occurred, and the normal relations between the two became complicated and difficult, day by day. For some years the relations between the two went on to the discomfiture of both, when suddenly an incident erupted the trouble and the estrangement between the Peshwa and the British became wider and deeper.

The Gaikwar of Baroda owed a debt of some three crores of rupees to the Peshwa and when the Peshwa was hard pressed by financial difficulties, he demanded the repayment of his debt from Gaikwar. Gaikwar had also entered into subsidiary alliance with the British and the Peshwa was already an ally of the British by the treaty of his subsidiary Alliance. So, the British had upper hand over both the Maratha Chiefs. The Peshwa for some time past was planning ways and means to free himself from the clutches of the British and once more he dreamed to head the Maratha confederacy to regain his past glory. But the invitation had already been lost by him. He was under the constant and close watch of the British resident at Poona and all his money and designs were noted and guarded by the British; but open breach and hostility did not occur till 1814.¹⁸

In the hope of settling the disputes between the Peshwa and the Gaikwar, the British tried to pacify them both and asked them to settle their dispute and account peacefully. For this Gaikwar was induced to send his principal minister Gangadhar Shastri to Poona under the Peshwa's safe conduct. The British also guaranteed the protection of Gangadhar Shastri while in his mission to Poona. Gangadhar Shastri was pro-English and was a strong adherent of the English alliance. He even borrowed the

17. Poona Gazetteer—Lord Valentia's Travels., Vol. II, page 103.

18. Haig, Sir Wolseley—*Op. Cit.*, page 483.

English ways of living and adopted them in his own life. He was consequently much disliked in Maratha circles. The deputation had been sponsored by the British government in order to ease the relations between the two chief allies. So the British were directly and indirectly responsible for peace and security of both. Thus, Gangadhar Shastri arrived at Poona in January, 1814. All arrangements for his comforts and requirements were done to his satisfaction. After some days of stay and repose, Gangadhar Shastri presented himself to the Peshwa and delivered the presents on behalf of Gaekwar, that he had brought with him. Soon the negotiations were opened on the subject of debt, but the progress was not encouraging, as was expected in a case involving such a large amount. Both the parties were adamant on their views, and after some time it became evident that a peaceful settlement acceptable to both, the creditor and the debtor was not possible. A whole year passed and no common ground for discussion and agreement was found out.

Gangadhar Shastri made use of his long stay at Poona in performing the sacred thread ceremony of his son with great pomp and show and invited the Peshwa to the same. Peshwa Baji Rao obliged him by his personal presence in the ceremony and even gave his presents. The relations between the two appeared to be so good that the sister of the Peshwa's wife was engaged for marriage with the son of Gangadhar Shastri. The Peshwa wished large scale preparations of the engagement ceremony at Nisik,¹⁹ a holy place. Peshwa Baji Rao was himself interested in that and was happy at the good match and relation. But at the last moment when everything was ready, Gangadhar Shastri suddenly declined to celebrate²⁰ the marriage for reasons, best known to him. However, Baji Rao, realising his helpless position bore that insult with a show of outward calm, but felt very much hurt in the hearts of his heart. This all had happened in an atmosphere of suspicion and mental tension to both the parties. Also, by that time it had become quite clear that the mission of Gangadhar Shastri was

19. Sardesai, G.S.—New History of the Marathas, Volume III (Bombay 1948), page 400.

20. Aitcheson Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, page 179-80 (Calcutta).

heading for a failure, and that no hopes of any peaceful settlement appeared there. In these circumstances a ghasty tragedy happened. Gangadhar Shastri was at Nasik accompanied by the Peshwa and Trimbak ji Dingle, who was the favourite Dewan of the Peshwa. They all had gone to Pondharpur, a place in Nasik to offer their worship to the famous temple of Vithalji. On the evening of July 20, 1815, Gangadhar Shastri went to the temple for the final prayer. Both of them were staying at different places. Night had fully set in, and while Gangadhar Shastri was returning from the temple, a band of armed men, in common men's dress attacked him and hacked him to pieces.

This brutal murder of Gangadhar Shastri greatly provoked the British, who considered themselves responsible for his safety and then in the event of his murder, also considered themselves responsible to punish the murderer. The British alleged that the murder took place in connivance with the Peshwa, and that Trimbakji, the man of Peshwa's confidence, hatched the plan and the murder was done by his men.

Elphinstone was the British Resident at Poona, he was asked by the government to take suitable action, and if need be armed conflict and intervention to redress the wrong ; and as such Elphinstone asked the Peshwa to surrender the person of Trimbakji to the British. The Peshwa denied the charge resolutely and did not comply with the wish of the Resident. But, it soon became clear to the Peshwa that the British were adamant to use force to back their demand, without listening to any argument from him. Peshwa Baji Rao now fully realised that he would not get justice from the British who were bent upon invading his territory in case of his non-compliance with their demand. The Peshwa was in a very precarious position and was unable to think as to what to do.

The British delivered an ultimatum to the Peshwa for the apprehension and surrender of Trimbakji within a month's time²¹ and as a guarantee against failure, threatened to occupy Poona.

21. Elphinstone wrote to Peshwa Baji Rao that taking into account all the factors, he was convinced that Trimbakji was the real culprit. He further asked Peshwa to arrest him, and unless he did not comply "the British will stop all things to him."

itself. However, the resident, in order to exhibit the strong determination of the British forcibly obtained possession of four Maratha forts in April, 1817. The poor Peshwa was not in a position to resist the evil designs of the British.²²

It may be recalled that from the very beginning of his rule Baji Rao had a great psychological disadvantage of being the son of Raghunath Rao who was believed to be a wicked man throughout Maharashtra and who was behind the murder of his own nephew. This greatly handicapped the Peshwa. In fact Peshwa Baji Rao had no hands in the murder of Gangadhar Shastri. He had the better option to reject the mission, but he respected the feelings of Gaekwar and was sincerely willing to patch up the differences with him and to come to agreeable terms. And if he had any design to do away with Gangadhar Shastri he could have done earlier, and would have despatched Shastri to another world in such a way that no one would have ever suspected him. Poona was his native place and domain and he was the master of the situation. So the British charge is not only baseless but also false and was cooked with evil designs first to defame the Peshwa, then to make him appear as a culprit and then under the garb of justice, to snatch away his territory. This was not the first time the British adopted such tactics, they had been doing so with other princes of Indian states. This time their prey was the Peshwa.

A close examination of Gangadhar Shastri clearly shows the fact that he was a great admirer of the British and a strong adherent of the English alliance. He felt proud in exhibiting himself as looking like an English man and he used to call the Peshwa and his people 'Dam fools'. The people of Maharashtra developed hatred for him and considered him to be an apostate. He was even looked upon as a man trying to inject the feelings of Christianity and English thought among the people. In those days few persons would like such an attitude. It was because of these feelings that some over-enthusiastic and zealous pro-Hindu lads planned the murder of Gangadhar Shastri and not the Peshwa Baji.

22. Godbola, Krishnaji Ballal, "Elphinstone Chritra" [(Maratha) (Bombay 1911), Page 179-80.

Rao or his men. So the British charge was completely baseless and they only capitalised the issue for their political gains, and the cunning British succeeded in their attempts.

Thus, the Peshwa was compelled to surrender Trimbakji after much delay. But after some time Trimbakji managed to escape, and the British believed the hand and the assistance of the Peshwa in his escape. In this way the matters were heading for a collision, with the British in an advantageous position and the Peshwa in utter confusion and disorder. His four forts were forcibly taken by the British in 1817, and the Peshwa was compelled to sign a treaty at Poona on 13th June, 1817.²³

It was an arbitrary treaty forced upon the Peshwa against his will and for no reason and cause. But the British were bent upon liquidation of the Indian states on one pretext or the other and consolidating and expanding their power and empire in India day by day. By this treaty, Trimbakji was declared to be the murderer of Gangadhar Shastri, all the territory outside Maharashtra was ceded to the British, the Peshwa was compelled to withdraw all his ambassadors and representatives from other Indian states and the Peshwa's relations with them were ended. He lost his political independence and sovereign rights and surrendered them all to the British. Gaekwar was acknowledged as independent ruler and other Maratha chiefs were freed from the bonds of the Peshwa. This ended the Peshwa's position as chief of the Maratha confederacy and also paved the way for its dissolution once for all.

This treaty was signed by Baji Rao under duress and with a heavy heart and bitter pains. This was a great humiliation and the mortal blow to the power, position and prestige of the Peshwa and so he made up his mind to give a last and resolute fight to the British for his emancipation and the dignity and respect of the great tradition which he inherited as Peshwa from his ancestors. Baji Rao started making all warlike preparations for the final contest. He recruited good soldiers for his army and managed to secure weapons. He was working on war footing. Peshwa

23. Haig, Sir Wolseley—*Op. Cit.*, page 483.

secretly opened his negotiations with other Maratha chiefs and instigated and invited them to join hands in the common task of ousting the British from their motherland. The Pindaris inroads into the British territory and their constant invasions, created a great problem to the British. It also posed a great threat to the internal security and opened a way for external attack. The British became alarmed of the Peshwa, and they in turn prepared themselves to meet the situation.

Elphinstone in his diary of October 23, 1817, gave a graphic account of the preparations which the Peshwa was undertaking at that time. He wrote that the Peshwa was in open revolt and was doing all preparations of war. The British Resident wrote that the Peshwa held secret meetings in which seditions and plots were hatched. The signal of murders and revolt were present everywhere.²⁴ The British Resident asked the Bombay Presidency to dispatch troops to re-inforce the position at Poona and as such a strong contingent of 2800 soldiers under Colonel Bur arrived at Khirki.

In that great hour of need Maratha chiefs again placed their personal interests above the national interest and failed to present a united front against the common foe. Gaekwar had already sealed his fate in respect of the British, and had isolated himself from the confederacy. Holker was undecided and also kept himself aloof, watching the situation. Sindhia also became a victim of British diplomacy, and separately signed the treaty of Gwalior and became faithful to the British. Only the Peshwa and Bhonsley remained in the field to attack the British.

Had the Maratha chiefs been wise enough to combine their forces and act together, they might have fought gallantly. But once more as after the treaty of Bassain, they were to fight one by one. Perhaps nothing illustrates more forcibly the political imbecility into which India had fallen then that the one Hindu power which had arisen after the fall of the Mughal empire should have proved utterly incapable of unity in the face of a foreign power. In fact, the eighteenth century merely repeats the history of those earlier centuries in which the Hindu princes submitted to the Muslims.²⁵

24. Godbole, Krishna ji Ballal, *Op. Cit.*, page 238.

25. Haig Sir Wolseley, *Op. Cit.*, page 484-85.

The complete surrender of Baji Rao. The two sides were ready to meet each other. Ultimately, the hostilities started on November 5, 1817 and the Peshwa attacked and burnt the British residency at Poona and then with his 27,000 men attacked the British force stationed at Khirki. The battle of Khirki was fought, but without any decisive result. Baji Rao failed to lead his troops to victory inspite of the fact that he had at that time vast number of soldiers and was superior in men and material. But he was not a good general nor a good soldier. He was not even a shrewd foresighted politician, so he again failed as before.

Baji Rao took yet another wrong step when he left Poona against the entreaties of his advisers and retreated to Purandher with his family and whatever treasure he could take with him. The British easily took possession of Peshwa's Shaniwar Palace and hoisted the British flag there. The city of Poona fell to the British.

In this way the Maratha empire virtually passed to the British and it lost its independent position for ever. Peshwa Baji Rao became a fugitive. Two more battles were fought, one at Koregoan and other at Ashti. In the battle of Ashti, the Peshwa's general Bapu Gokhala was killed. The Peshwa's position then became completely hopeless and he escaped with his family and treasure.

The Governor General then issued a proclamation on February 11, 1818 in which the British justified their action to oust the Peshwa and pointed how the Peshwa was responsible for what had happened. It also invited the allegiance of the Maratha people to the company and asked them to relinquish the cause of the Peshwa. This instrument was full of clever diplomacy and it bore fruits. The British were able to paint the Peshwa as responsible for all the troubles of the people of Poona and Maharashtra and that the British had come as benefactors and messengers of peace and security to all.

Baji Rao fled from place to place and the British army was in his pursuit. The fugitive Peshwa could not get asylum anywhere. His large territories and the territories of his confederates became foreign to him, and out of the fear of the British no one dared to approach him. He was deserted by all his 'near and dear ones'

and the physical sufferings augmented with mental agony at last broke his spirit and the miserable Peshwa at last sued for peace and surrendered himself before General Malcolm, and accepted the terms of peace offered to him by the General on June 2, 1818.

The terms demanded of the Peshwa complete resignation of all his powers which he had possessed and the complete abandonment of the country which he had once ruled. In return he was offered a safe asylum and liberal provisions for his living. The terms known as proposition to Baji Rao, delivered by General Malcolm are as follows :

- First* : That he shall resign for himself and his successors all rights, title and claim over the government of Poona or to any sovereign power whatever.
- Second* : That Baji Rao shall immediately come with his family and a small number of adherents and attendants to the camp of Brigadier General Malcolm where he shall be received with honour and respect and escorted safely to the city of Benares or any other sacred place in Hindustan that the Governor General may at his request fix for his residence.
- Third* : On account of the peace of the Deccan, and the advanced state of the season, Baji Rao must proceed to Hindustan without one day's delay, but Brigadier General Malcolm engages that any part of his family that may be left behind shall be sent to him as early as possible and every facility shall be given to render their journey speedy and convenient.
- Fourth* : That Baji Rao shall on his voluntarily agreeing to this arrangement, receive a liberal pension from the company's government for the support of himself and his family. The amount of his pension will be fixed by the Governor General. Brigadier General Malcolm takes upon himself to engage that it shall not be less than eight lacs of rupees per annum.

Fifth : If Bajī Rao by a complete and ready fulfilment of this agreement shows that he reposes entire confidence in the British Government, his requests in favour of his principal Jagirdars and old adherents, who have been ruined by their attachment to him, will meet with liberal attention. His representatives also in favour of Brahmans of venerable character, and of religious establishments founded or supported by his family will be treated with regard.

Sixth : The above propositions must not only be accepted by Bajī Rao, but he must personally come into Brigadier General Malcolm's camp within twenty four hours of this period or else hostilities will be recommended and no further negotiations will be entered into with him.²⁶

The surrender took place in Brigadier General Malcolm's camp at Mahova. Once a sovereign power and the hope of Hindustan for realising the dream of Shivaji, 'Hindu-pod-Padshahi' his power was dashed to the ground by the British who had come as traders and begged for trade and protection. The traders had become masters and the masters were reduced to a mere citizen, dependent upon the mercy of the British.

The Governor General, Lord Hastings, after careful consideration formally approved and sanctioned the terms of the agreement. Bajī Rao's abdication left the company masters of a territory which in 1815 was yielding a net revenue of rupees 97 lacs. The British very tactfully left Satara for the Chatrapati, that territory within Chatrapati's domain yielded a net revenue of rupees 23 lacs at that time. The British gave full respect to Chatrapati and acknowledged his rights and duties within his control as usual. The British did not like to make two enemies in the same land at one time, otherwise the British could have engulfed easily Chatrapati as well who was as powerless and helpless as the Peshwa himself. The British also confiscated lands of the Peshwa's sardars and dependants which added a further annual revenue of

26. Aitcheson—"Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads", Vol. VII (Calcutta 1892, revised upto 1929) part Ist, page 70-71.

rupees 25 lacs. The British at once proceeded to decide their conquered territory into four divisions.²⁷

Baji Rao accepted the unilateral agreement imposed upon him by the British but he did not like the idea of passing his last days in Benares. He preferred a more quiet and peaceful place and after careful considerations made up his mind to settle in Brahmavart, commonly known as Bithoor. Baji Rao's younger brother Chimnaji Appa was granted an annuity of rupees two lacs²⁸ and he retired to Benares in 1819. Baji Rao's adopted brother Amrit Rao had settled at Karir in the Banda district. Amrit Rao's descendants took active part in the national uprising of 1857 and are still surviving, receiving a pension from the Government, still cherishing the memory of the distinguished family of the Peshwas who were once the master of the land.

(3) *The last days of Baji Rao :*

Baji Rao in Brahmavart or Bithoor

The vanquished and melancholy Peshwa made his way to Bithoor and followed the tedious and arduous journey from South to North. He was accompanied by his wives and the near and dear members of his family. His own army was disbanded and many of such released soldiers who preferred to follow the Peshwa, than to stay back were also allowed to accompany the Peshwa. Thus, the uprooted sovereign, the deserted Peshwa and the defeated head of Maharashtra left his ancestral homeland for ever and proceeded to a distant place to pass the rest of his life in exile there.

The exiled Peshwa proceeded to the north with a retinue of 600 horsemen and 200 footmen and with all his house-hold members. Ram Chandra Pant Subedar and Babba Salkade and many other dependants followed him. The party crossed the Narbada river on June 12, Lieutenant Low was deputed to accompany the exiled Peshwa as a mark of respect and also to give protection to the party. Baji Rao slowly travelled via Ajmer and spent several

27. Sardesai, G.S.—*Op. Cit.*, Volume II, page 509.

28. Foreign Political consultations No. 48 dated 18 June, 1832.

months at Mathura. The British had suggested that he could settle at Monghyr, or Gorakhpur, but the religious minded Peshwa preferred a more suitable, holy as well as peaceful place and finally in February, 1819 he entered Bithoor and settled there permanently.

Bithoor²⁹ was an ancient and sacred place, situated on the right bank of the Ganga. Bithoor at that time was fourteen miles away from the city of Kanpur towards the northern side. The Grand Trunk Road connected the town with Kanpur. The town being a religious place many religious festivals and fairs were held annually in Bithoor. As the Hindu religious text books say, the God Brahma, performed the great horse sacrifice for propagating the human race on earth. So it was named as Brahmvart. Legends say that God Brahma there performed the Yagna and installed the image of God Shivaji and named that as Brhmeshwar Mahadev. God Brahma also installed Manu and his queen Satrupa and then the human race began to propagate. It was the Brahmvart, where in mythological times King Uttanpada ruled for a long time. His celebrated son, Dhruva was born here, who by his great penance pleased God Vishnuji and then became immortal. It was in Brahmvart that the great Sanskrit ('first' i.e., 'Adi') poet and sage, Valmiki, lived in his hermitage. It was in his hermitage that Sitaji lived during her exile and gave birth to Lava and Kusha ; and the great Valmiki wrote his Ramayan.

It was for these reasons that Baji Rao liked to live and pass the rest of his life in Brahmvart. Bithoor was formerly the part of Oudh. But the British acquired a large territory of Oudh, including Bithoor and Kanpur by the treaty of November 10, 1801, with the Nawab of Oudh, Suja-Ud-Daula and since then Bithoor was part of the British domain.

The British³⁰ granted a Jagir to Baji Rao for his residence and that of his followers. The grant was made subject to the pleasure of the government. The jagir was also excluded from British civil and criminal jurisdiction, thus Baji Rao was also given judicial rights over the inhabitants within his jagir. A British Commissioner

29. Statistical Descriptive and Historical Account of N.W.P., Volume VI, Page 217.

30. The Regulation of 1832 of the Government of India.

was appointed to look after the affairs of Baji Rao and also to help him whenever he needed. The British Commissioner was the link between Baji Rao and the British government in all correspondence and in any dispute that would arise between the two. Since then Baji Rao lost all his titles and deeds and was addressed only as Maharaja Baji Rao Bahadur. Baji Rao felt sore and hurt, at the abolition of his ancestral titles but he was helpless. Great misery made the Peshwa all the more miserable. He felt suffocating but he had to bear all insults quietly, as there was no remedy left for him. The Peshwa finally reconciled himself to his lot in Bithoor since 1819.³¹

The Peshwa had to rehabilitate himself and so he built a large mansion on the right Bank of the Ganga on a raised ground. The building was a two-storied one facing the north and the river Ganga flowed on its eastern side. Adjacent to the main building the Peshwa constructed a beautiful and grand bathing ghat and a large temple and 'Thakurdwara' and installed the statues of his deities there. This was the private place of worship for the Peshwa and his family.

The mansion was quite spacious with two courtyards and verandahs all around. Its inner portion was better fortified and was meant for the ladies of the Peshwa's family. It contained numerous rooms for various purposes. The whole building was decorated in grand style with large mirrors, costly chandeliers and pieces of heavy furniture as was the accepted fashion of the time.

But Baji Rao, who had spent his glorious days in the grand palace of Shaniwar at Poona, did not find it adequate to accommodate him and his family in a befitting and comfortable manner. So, he planned to erect a new one, much bigger, and more replete with grandeur, space and structure than the previous one.

A better site was chosen at some distance from the river bank, but in the proximity of the dwelling houses. The site covered several acres of land. Soon the second mansion was constructed.

31. Sardesai, G.S.—*Op. Cit*, Vol. III, page 500.

It had extensive halls that were duly decorated with beautiful coloured carpets and tapestries. The halls and rooms were beautifully fitted with covered mirrors, carved ivory works and valuable china pieces. Magnificent chandeliers added beauty to its grandeur and show. Baji Rao decorated the main hall with portraits of his ancestors hanging on the walls, and also placed his own portrait there.

Baji Rao named this new grand mansion as Shaniwar Bara after the name of and fashion of his former Shaniwar Palace at Poona. An enclosure wall surrounded the vast area. Seven large wells of great depth were dug for the purpose of procuring drinking water. The Peshwa constructed a beautiful and big temple inside the walls. Thus the whole structure was a grand one in the midst of picturesque surroundings. The lordly flow of the river Ganga gave a religious feelings to the place and holy atmosphere to the surroundings.

But the whole edifice, with the appurtenant building, was razed to the ground by the retaliatory British after the re-occupation of Kanpur in the great national rising of 1857. All that now remains of this, once famous grand Shaniwar Bara of Baji Rao, are the wells, that tell us the story and grandeur of the place in their majestic silence.

When the Peshwa shifted to his new building he gave his former residence to his Subedar Ram Chandra who begged from the Peshwa his first dwelling house. The British did not damage this building in 1857, as Subedar Narain Rao, the son of Subedar Ram Chandra, was on good terms with the British and was a great opponent of Peshwa Nana Saheb.

Baji Rao had a small army for his protection and safety, so he maintained a train of elephants, camels and horses. Baji Rao maintained his former stately standard in miniature in his Shaniwar Bara as well.

Baji Rao lived a simple and pious life in Bithoor. He found ample time to observe his religious practices to his satisfaction. He spent most of his time in worship. He also undertook pilgrimages

to holy places, particularly Benares, Prayag and Gaya. Baji Rao was a man of learning and he always liked to live in the society of scholars, philosophers and poets. He possessed the art of eloquence in which he excelled. He patronized art and literature, and soon Bithoor became a centre of scholars and well-read persons. Baji Rao also patronized the priests and high caste learned Brahmans for religious ceremonies. He was a man of perseverance and endurance and had a great capacity for forbearance. He was an enlightened and highly cultured man. During Baji Rao's time Bithoor for these reasons became well known throughout the country.

Bithoor suited very much to the religious temperament of Baji Rao which he had inherited from the earlier Peshwas and from his orthodox Brahman family to which he belonged. In Bithoor he had nothing to do other than his personal duties and religious performances. He engaged himself so much to the worship of God that it enabled him to forget his past and gave coverage to pass his life peacefully. Outwardly he reconciled himself with the changed circumstances and adopted a normal life with his normal behaviour.

One of the wives of Peshwa Baji Rao was Saraswati Bai, when she died Baji Rao cremated her in Arazi Lashkar on the bank of river Ganga. On the spot where he lit her funeral-pyre and where her mortal remains were consigned to the flames, Baji Rao erected a temple dedicated to God Shivji. The temple is known as Sri Saraswateshwar after the name of his departed wife. The ashes of her body were buried underneath the temple according to tradition.

In front of this Saraswateshwar temple, Baji Rao built a bathing ghat of strong stones with beautiful architecture. This ghat is still intact and preserved to-day to speak of the glory of its builder. The temple was built of strong stones and bricks on a square platform. The floor inside the temple was paved with white and black marble of exquisite beauty and of rare quality. A few pieces still left to day on the base of the central door-way, are witness of the fact.

As a reprisal against Nana Sâheb the British blew up the whole mansion of Baji Rao, and were also to destroy this temple,

but it was saved by the intervention of a muslim nobleman, who purchased the construction and then allowed that to stand and survive.

Near Saraswateshwar temple there was a big residential house of Tatya Tope who was the *famous general* of 1857 national uprising, and who used to live there during the life of Baji Rao II. After the death of Baji Rao II, Tatya Tope entered the services of Nana Saheb and led his forces in the great national liberation movement of 1857. The original building was demolished by the British after the mutiny. After some time the present building was raised on the foundations of the old one. The owner of this building is the nephew of the Great Tatya Tope, his name is Narain Rao. He even to this date possesses a number of original pictures of Peshwa Baji Rao, and Tatya Tope.

Many old buildings of antiquity were renovated by Peshwa Baji Rao including the *Valmiki Ashram* and temples in Brahmavart at that time.

Raja Shiva Prasad of Benares, once visited Baji Rao in his mansion at Bithoor. The Raja, while on his way back from Delhi to Benares reached Kanpur and from there he went to Bithoor to see him, who was once the Chief of Maratha confederacy. The two met in a very cordial atmosphere after which the Raja returned back.³²

Baji Rao during, his life time had married eleven³³ times. While he was Peshwa at Poona he married six wives and when he settled down at Bithoor, he married five more wives. There was personal reason for his having married so many wives. It was a known fact that Baji Rao did not have his own son. So he was always eager to have a natural son, partly because for social reasons, and to a great extent for his religious faith and belief.

32. Raja Shiva Prasad of Varansi wrote his autobiography entitled "Sawan-a-Umri", in which he gave a good account of his visit to Peshwa Baji Rao at Bithoor.

33. Azimullah's diary shows that Baji Rao had contracted eleven marriages (six when he was at Poona and five at Bithoor).

There was also another reason for it. It was a belief amongst many people of Maharashtra who had their close associations with Baji Rao, that Baji Rao was haunted and harassed by the Ghost of the murdered Peshwa Narayana Rao who was assassinated by armed persons in collusion and connivance of Raghunath Rao, the father of Peshwa Baji Rao. The Ghost first haunted Raghunath Rao, and after his death it haunted Baji Rao. When Baji Rao went to Bithoor the ghost followed him there too. When Baji Rao was alone the Ghost was very much troublesome to him, so Baji Rao did his best to pass his time always in the company of his one or the other wife to avoid the fear of the Ghost. The religious minded Baji Rao, in order to sooth and soften the ghost set apart one room in his mansion and kept all necessary things there for use by the Ghost. Apparently Baji Rao did all that in order to calm down and lay at rest the restless soul of his cousin. While at Poona Baji Rao planted several hundred thousand trees about Poona, gave many charitable articles and money to Brahmans, constructed many religious establishments and often visited Vithoba's temple, in Pendharpur for his personal satisfaction and also for the emancipation of the frequently haunting soul of the murdered Peshwa Narayan Rao.³⁴

Baji Rao adopted Nana Saheb. Baji Rao used to receive his pension in instalments at Bithoor from the British authorities. This amount was sufficient for him to meet his expenses and to lead a comfortable and carefree life. In this way Baji Rao passed his days in peace and prayer in Bithoor, when in 1840, he fell ill and his health deteriorated so much, that there was little hope for his survival. Baji Rao became very much anxious about his family and property, regarding their fate after his death. He was very eager that the members of his family should pass their days without let or hindrance, after his demise. So, to settle all doubts to rest, Baji Rao executed a will bequeathing all his property and priviledges to his adopted son Nana Saheb, who had then attained the age of twenty five years and was a responsible man and mature enough to shoulder the responsibilities after him.

34. Bombay Gazetteer Poona, Volume part II, page 293.



PESHWA NANA SAHEB DHONDU PANT

(4) *The written testament*

The written will³⁵ of Baji Rao³⁶ was as under :

"This is written for the purpose of making known to Her Majesty the Queen, England, the Honourable the East India Company and to all men, that Dhondoo Punt Nana, my eldest son ; and Gangadhar Rao my youngest and third son, and Sada Shew Punt Dada, son of my second son Pandoo Rung Rao, my grand son; these three are my sons and grandson. After me Dhondoo (Dhondoo) Punt Nama (Name) my eldest son, Mookh Purdhan, shall inherit, and be the sole master of the Guddee of Peshwa, the Dominion, Wealth, Desh Mookhee, etc., Watum (family) possession, Treasure and all my rent and personal property. And he, Dhondoo Punt, and his heirs shall inherit the Rank of Peshwa, the Dominion, Wealth etc., and his younger brother Gangadhar Rao and his nephew Pandoo Rung Rao, Sada Shiv and their children, as it becomes a brother and to the servants and the Ryuts as it is proper, shall be afforded due support and maintenance by him. And Gungadhar Rao and Pandoo Rung Rao the servants, the Ryuts etc., shall pay obedience to Dhondoo Punt Nana, Mookh Pradhan and continue to serve him with fidelity and be subject to him. And if I shall hereafter beget a son of my own body, then he shall as aforesaid, be the Mookh Pradhan and heir to Guddee of Peshwa, and possess all the Dominions, Wealth, Desh Mookhee etc., Watandaree, Treasure, and all my property, whatsoever, and his heirs too from generation to generation and shall provide as is proper for his brother, servants and Ryuts. And Dhondoo Punt Nana and all others shall pay obedience to him and his heirs. This testament I have written with my free will and pleasure, dated 4th Shuval

35. Foreign Political consultation, 16 December, 1853, No. 106 National Archives New Delhi and Agra Narrative Foreign Department 1844-1852 secretariate Record office, U.P., Lucknow.

36. Baji Rao first prepared his will on December 11, 1839 and then again executed the same will and signed the document on April 30, 1841. Colonel Manson, the Commissioner with Baji Rao was the witness.

Mittee Aghan Buddee, 5th Saket as above according with 11th December, 1839. After this what can be said more."³⁷

Peshwa Baji Rao when completed this document,³⁸ got it signed by witnesses, such as British Commissioner at Bithoor Colonel Manson, Subedar Ram Chandra Pant, the manager of Peshwa Baji Rao, Subedar Narayane Ram Chandra, Bapuji Sakharam Godbole, Vinayak Ballabh Gokhely, and Ram Chandra Ganesh Bherya. The date which the witnesses wrote on the will was April 30th, 1841, Bithoor. All the signatories to the will were respectable persons of Bithoor holding responsible positions there. One and the first copy of this will was sent to Governor General, through the British Commissioner at Bithoor.

Baji Rao sent the copies of his letter of succession to all Maratha Chiefs and Indian princes, with whom he was in correspondence, for information. Recently, the historian Bhaskar Rao Bhalerao of Gwalior traced out a true copy of the will of Peshwa Baji Rao from the old records of the house of Mule family of Jhansi. The ancestors of this Mule family were the hereditary Dewans of Jhansi Kingdom. This copy of the will of Peshwa Baji Rao is very important from this point of view that it is full and complete and gives a clear picture of what Baji Rao wrote in his will. Originally it was written in Marathi.

The Governor General received the copy of the will of Baji Rao, but did not reply to him. Baji Rao requested the Governor General to accept and acknowledge his will, but his wish was not received favourably. But when Colonel Manson wrote to Government asking for instructions to be followed on the death of Baji Rao ; then, he received the instructions that,

"On the demise of Baji Rao, the legal heir would enter at once into possession of the property, and it would be only, necessary"

37. The memorial of Nana Saheb to Governor General, Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. I, page 26, [(Publication Bureau, U.P. Government, Lucnow 1957-61)]

38. Hardikar, Srinewas Balaji, 'Nana Saheb Peshwa' (Delhi 1969),.. page 260-262.

for Lieutenant Colonel P. Manson to afford to him all the assistance in effecting this object and to aid him, so far as right be requisite, in making proper arrangements for the support of the other branches of the family, who were left dependant on him under the terms of the will."³⁹

Baji Rao soon recovered from his illness and for the time being the immediate question of inheritance was shelved, and it looked like normal thought. Baji Rao was the worst sufferer in the hands of the British, outwardly, he reconciled himself to them, and was always ready to extend his warm hand and welcome to the British. During the first Anglo-Afghan wars (1838-42) Baji Rao helped the British by giving them a loan of Rupees five lacs, which was never repaid by the British. Also during the Anglo-Sikh war, Baji Rao helped the British with financial assistance to equip one thousand horse-men and one thousand soldiers. Apart from this whenever any British dignitary visited Bithoor Baji Rao always extended great courtesy to him and showed his high sense of hospitality.

Death of Baji Rao. Baji Rao had become old. For some time he was not feeling well, and in the third week of January, 1851, he seriously fell ill. He was given full medical treatment but to no avail, and he breathed his last on January 28, 1851.

The British Commissioner Colonel Mansoon, reported the death of Baji Rao to the Government and then in his letter dated January 31, 1851, he wrote that "perfect order and tranquility had been kept since the Maharaja's death."

On the same day Nana Saheb took control of all affairs at Bithoor and assumed full responsibilities to discharge his duties as the heir of the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao. Nana Saheb on the same day, made all necessary preparation for the funeral of Baji Rao and performed it with great pomp and show, and with all the traditions and customs, observed in the case of other previous Peshwas on.

39. Agra Narrative Foreign Department 1844-52 Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. I, page 32-33 (Lucknow 1957-61).

such occasions.⁴⁰ The last rites were performed on the bank of the river Ganga. The body of Bajī Rao was placed on the pier made of Sandal wood and the fire was lit by Nana Saheb. After the body was consumed by the fire and all last rites were performed, the party left for their homes at Bithoor. The funeral obsequies of Bajī Rao were performed much on the same lines and traditions that were followed in the case of his predecessors. Vedic ceremonies and Shastric rituals were also performed in full at that time. The five principal items namely, elephant-gift, horse-gift, gold-gift, jewels gift and land-gifts were made to Brahmans at the time of any Peshwa's funeral rites.

Nana Saheb also gave elephants, horses, gold and jewels as gifts to Brahmans, but when the question of land gift arose, the poor Nana Saheb breathed a sigh of sorrow as he did not possess even a biswa of land. There came forward one Maratha Sardar, whose name was Raghunath Rao Vinchurkar, and who was present at Bithoor at the time of the Bajī Rao's death. As a mark of respect and loyalty to the ex-Peshwa and to his family he offered his fifty two villages in Maharashtra to Nana Saheb to be distributed amongst Brahmans as land-gift. Nana Saheb with a heavy heart accepted the offer and did accordingly. In this way he performed all the five Mahadans in Bajī Rao's last religious rites.⁴¹

The death of Bajī Rao caused gloom and sorrow throughout Bithoor. Not only Brahmavarta but the whole of India was plunged into deep sorrow.

(5) *Company's Refusal to Nana's rights*

On receiving the report of Colonel Manson about the death of Bajī Rao the government asked the Commissioner to send a prompt report about the amount of property left by Bajī Rao. Colonel Manson was also asked to furnish a detailed list of all the dependents for whose support it was necessary to provide the help.

40. Vinchurkar, Raghunath Rao, "Tirthyatra" (Marathi) (unpublished, preserved in History Research Institute, Poona) part III, page 25-26.

41. Vinchurkar, Raghunath Rao, *Op. Cit.*, page 26.

In the mean time Subedar Ram Chandra Pant, the manager of the late Peshwa Baji Rao, on the advice and direction of Nana Saheb prepared a list stating the (then) position and the future prospects of the family, with dependants and adherents of late Baji Rao, and submitted the same to the Government through the Commissioner, Colonel Manson, who on February 10, 1851, forwarded the list to the government. The Lieutenant Governor, on that application further demanded the particulars regarding the age, the number of all members, their rank and position in the family, and all the circumstances under which the family and all its dependants were living and would live. This information was demanded without delay. Lt. Governor further wrote to Colonel Manson, that no recommendations would be made to Governor-General without first ascertaining the facts. He further instructed Manson, to induce the adherents to return to Maharashtra, as there was no hope of any help to them. Lt. Governor directed Manson not to commit any thing to Nana Saheb. However, the Lt. Governor admitted the right of Nana Saheb to inherit the personal property of Baji Rao, but refused to acknowledge his claim for pension. In this way the Nana's right to the pension and to all other rights which Baji Rao enjoyed as ex-Peshwa were denied,⁴² and only the right of inheritance to the personal property of Baji Rao was admitted treating him an ordinary citizen.

During this period of correspondence, Colonel Manson the British Commissioner, proceeded on leave and Mr. Morland, the then collector and Magistrate of Kanpur was appointed in his place. Mr. Morland received a detailed report and a statement containing all the details of the property and about all the members of the family. He also received an application of Nana Saheb praying that the pension of the late Peshwa, be given to him, as the legal heir of the deceased.

Mr. Morland, after receiving full information and requisite details, forwarded the same with his personal recommendation that

42. Agra Narratives, Foreign Department, April, 1836 to December, 1858, Secretariat Records Office, U.P. Lucknow. Narrative of the Proceedings of Hon'ble Lieutt. Governor of N.W.P. in the political Deptt. Collection No. 16.

a portion of the pension of late Baji Rao be given to Nana Saheb for the support of the family and his adherants. But the Lt. Governor did not agree with the recommendations of Mr. Morland and suggested to Governor General that "The very liberal allowance enjoyed for so long a period by the late Baji Rao should have enabled him to make an ample provision for his family". The Lt. Governor was of the view that the ex-Peshwa had left only his adopted sons, and so they did not possess any claim for further support or pension, and he was also of the opinion, that the late Peshwa had amassed vast treasure, which was sufficient to meet the expenses of his family. Thus, the right of Nana Saheb to get a portion of the pension of Baji Rao was rejected by the Lt. Governor. Lord Dalhousie who was the Governor General of India at that time, also agreed with the views of Lt. Governor and rejected Nana Saheb's right of getting the portion of pension and termed that as uncalled for and unreasonable.

Lord Dalhousie remarked that,

"In 39 years the Peshwa received the enormous sum of more than two and a half million sterling. He had no charges to maintain, no sons of his own and has bequeathed 28 lacs to his family. Those who remain have no claim whatever on the consideration of the British Government. They have no claim on its charity, because the income left to them is amply sufficient for them."⁴³

Lord Dalhousie's decision and conclusion was accepted and endorsed by the Directors of the Company. In their letter of May 19, 1852, addressed to the Government of India they observed "We entirely approve of the decision of the Governor General that the adopted son and dependants of Baji Rao have no claim upon the British Government. The large pension which the ex-Peshwa enjoyed during thirty three years afforded him the means of the making of an abundant provision for his family and dependants and the property which he is known to have left is amply sufficient for their support.

43. Banerjee—Indian Constitutional Documents. Vol. I part "Lord Dalhousie on Annexation of Indian State", page 347.

And when Nana Saheb presented his memorandum to the Court of Directors, then the Directors rejected Nana Saheb's appeal and remarked that "The pension of his adoptive father was not hereditary, that he had no claim whatever to it and that his application was wholly inadmissible.

The Government of India abolished the post of the Commissioner to Bithoor and Nana Saheb was asked to communicate through the Collector and Magistrate of Kanpur.

Nana Saheb received the decision of the Government with a sad heart. He had great hope in the British sense of justice but all his hopes were shattered. He regarded the British as a nation that worked on constitutional and democratic lines. But in his case the British behaved in an unsympathetic and despotic manner. He became convinced that he would not get justice from them and since then instead of sitting idle, he became very active to achieve his aim mainly because the British took all the economic, social and cultural considerations in political light; and imposed their decisions on the Indians; which was contrary to the basic concept of normal norms of humanism.



NANA SAHEB

This is the picture which appears in
Shri V. D. Savarkar's book—*The Indian
War of Independence, 1857.*

CHAPTER III

The Early Life of Nana Saheb

(1) *Birth and Childhood*

On the Western coast of Maharashtra amongst the beautiful mountainous valleys and cliffs there is one beautiful valley, in which was situated the village Venu in Taluka Nastrapur. Venu village at that time was within the Karzet Taluqadari of Ahmadnagar district. Here in this village, Nana Saheb was born on May 19th, 1825. His father's name was Mahadeva or Madho Narain Rao Bhat. The name of his mother was Ganga Bai. He came of a high family of Maharashtra Brahman that was very religious and cultural. His full name was Nana Govind Dhondu Pant. It was customary in the families of Maharashtra to give the pet name of Nana to that child, who was held in great care and affection. Nana in Marathi language means small, but affectionate, attractive and loving. This is why the name Nana was given to Dhondu Pant in his childhood, which later became permanently attached to his name. His childhood name as given by his parents was, Govind.¹

Both Nana Saheb's father Madho Narain and Peshwa Baji Rao belonged to one 'gotra' (caste name) and thus they were brothers of the same 'gotra'. In 1818, the Peshwa was defeated by the British, and when he relinquished all his claims and kingdom to the British, he proceeded in exile to Bithoor. When Peshwa left Poona, many of his dependants and favourites found it difficult

1. The Lt. Governor of N.W. Provinces in his letter of October 14, 1852, the name of Nana Saheb as Nana Govind Dhondu Pant, Agra Narrative for second Quarter of 1851—Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. I, page 40.

to pass their days peacefully there. Their life became very miserable and they were hard pressed. With the departure of the Peshwa from Poona the general conditions of all the inhabitants of Poona had become very poor. Money, trade and commerce used to flow and flourish in Poona during the days of the Peshwa, but when the Peshwa left Poona for ever, all the sources of income were also closed and there remained very scanty means on which the traders and businessmen could hardly dwell. Gloom and sorrow prevailed throughout, and the traders, money-lenders, factory workers and the members of family found it very hard and difficult to make a living. The prosperous families began to sell their household articles to make a living. The general condition of Poona became deplorable.²

When such was the condition of the common people of Poona, how the poor family of Madho Narain Rao could live there? So in 1819, Madho Narain with his wife Ganga Bai and others proceeded to Bithoor to seek the shelter of Baji Rao and to live under his patronage. Baji Rao took Madho Narain Rao in his service and allowed him to live within his campus. Madho Narain was a very simple and honest man. He began to serve Baji Rao with singular sincerity and honesty which soon attracted the attention of Baji Rao towards him. Madho Narain often visited the court of the Peshwa, and always kept himself busy with his duties. Soon Madho Narain came in the good books of Baji Rao and became his favourite.

Madho Narain had his eldest son, whose name was Bala Bhatt. Soon a second son was born to him whom the parents named as Govind. This child was known as Nana for his being very pretty and attractive. When Madho Narain visited the residence of the Peshwa, he used to take the baby Nana with him there. Baji Rao gradually became so much impressed with the child that he decided to adopt him as his son. Since Baji Rao had no natural son he converted his decision into reality, and adopted Nana Govind as his son on 7 June, 1827. The genealogical table of Madho Narain Rao shows that Nana Saheb was the second of the three brothers and two sisters.

2. Majumdar, Shankar Bapuji. "The History of the Peshwas" Marathi (Bombay 1927), page 45.

Being born in a poor family, the details of the date of birth of Nana Saheb and about his childhood are very few, which are insufficient to throw light on all the facts. Historians³ differ on the exact date and year of his birth. The famous historian Malleson states that "when Baji Rao died his son and successor was of 27 years of age."⁴ This means that since Baji Rao died in 1851, the year of the birth of Nana Saheb should fall in 1825. It is also on record that it was at the age of three years that Nana Govind was adopted by Peshwa Baji Rao; and the adoption took place in 1827.⁵

The historian Shivnarain Duwadi in his book "The History of 1857 Mutiny" has stated that "when Baji Rao died Nana Saheb was of 27 years of age.

There has been some confusion regarding the year of the birth of Nana Saheb. Many of the Indian historians have accepted the view of many English writers that the year of the birth of Nana Saheb was 1824. This mistake appears to have originated due to the miscalculation of the years from the year of birth of Nana Saheb to the year of death of Peshwa Baji Rao. Unless there is not some mathematical calculation, normally the common method of counting is to include both the years of the beginning and of the end in taking into account the number as a whole. The famous Maratha historian, Govind Sakhararam Sardesai has also written⁶ that "In 1824, a son named Dhondhu was born to Madho Narain and Ganga Bai." In this context, it is to be stated that the name Dhondhu was given to Nana after his adoption and the name Govind was given to him by his parents. So, Sardesai only followed the line adopted by the British writers. If this would have been from the original source, then the name Govind should have been there instead of Dhondoo.

The Indian History Research Council, Poona, in its quarterly magazine, third part of December, 1960, has published the real

3. Kaye, Sir John William—A History of the Sepoy war in India. (London 1878-80), Vol. I, page 318.
4. Malleson, Col. G.B., Indian Mutiny of 1857 (London 1906), page 78-79.
5. Misra, A.S.—Nana Saheb Peshwa (Lucknow 1961), page 131.
6. Sardesai G.S., "Marathi Reyasat" (Marathi) (Bombay 1929), page 542.

horoscope of Nana Saheb. This valuable document was discovered by Krishnaji Haripatankar from the old records of the Sanskrit School of the village, named Rajapur, which is in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. He found a paper, in which there are two horoscopes made on that, but without any date or year mentioned therein. Krishnaji Haripatankar in his letter states that "many Brahman families of Rajapur region migrated with Govind Pant Kher to Brahmavarta. Among them was a Brahman family of Tilrey village, that was at about a distance of four Kos from Rajapura. This Brahman family of Tilrey village was of renowned Sanskrit scholar and astrologer Pandit Jaikrishna Anand Gurger. He had written many books by the side of river Yamuna in Jalon district during the period of 1813 to 1834. When he went to Brahmavarta, he was well received by Baji Rao, who extended his patronage to him and utilised his services for his worship and observations on Brahmanical studies. Baji Rao showed the horoscopes of Nana Saheb and of his another adopted son's son Rao Saheb, to Pandit Jaikrishna Anand Gurger, who recorded them in his own book, and also wrote the names of Nana Saheb and Rao Saheb on their respective horoscopes. After the death of Pandit Jai Krishna Anand Gurger, Vinayak Ram Chandra Gurger became the family head and all the manuscripts of Pandit Jai Krishna Anant Gurger came to his possession. After the unsuccessful national uprising of 1857, the Gurger family along with other Maratha families, was forced to go back to its original homeland in Maharashtra, and hence Vinayak Ram Chandra Gurger went back to his village Tilrey. He then donated all the Sanskrit manuscripts to Sanskrit School of Rajapur and along with that all the manuscripts of Pandit Jai Krishna Anant Gurger were bequeathed to that Sanskrit School, and here from these Sanskrit manuscripts, Krishnaji Haripatankar of Rajapur, traced the horoscopes of Nana Saheb and Rao Saheb.⁷ Thus the documentary evidence proves the fact. The horoscope of Nana Saheb is as under:

The Planetary position in the horoscope is a solid ground for calculating the year, month and date of the birth of Nana Saheb. In astronomical observations and calculations, the Saturn gives the calculation of the year, the Sun gives the calculation of the month.

7. Nana Saheb Peshwa—Srinewas Balaji Hardikar, page 30-33.

and the Moon's position gives the calculation of the days. So, according to this calculation the exact date of birth of Nana Saheb comes as May 19th, 1825, on thursday night in between 8 to 9 p.m.⁸



Adoption by Baji Rao. Thus, born in a poor family, Nana Saheb came to the grand family of Peshwa Baji Rao as an adopted son. His younger brother Bala Saheb was also adopted by the Peshwa. In this will Baji Rao has written Bala Saheb to be his adopted son. Similarly, the will states that Pandoo Rang Rao or Raghunath Rao was also adopted, who later on died leaving a son behind him, known as Rao Saheb. But these two, Bala Saheb and Pandoo Rang Rao, could not be treated equally with Nana Saheb, as the Hindu Law permits the adoption of only one son and where one son exists another cannot be adopted with the same rights as the first one.⁹

The object of adoption in the eye of law is two fold, the first is religious, to secure spiritual benefit to the adopter and his ancestors by having a son for the purpose of offering funeral fire, and libations of water to the *names* of the adopter and his ancestors. The second object is secular, that is to secure an heir and perpetuate the adopted name in future in the line of descendants.

8 Indian History Research Council, Poona (year—19 Edition—3, Saka 1860 corresponding to 1938).

9. Mulla, Dinshah Fardunji. 'Hindu Law', page 509.

Baji Rao, being a religious man was well acquainted with the principles of law and religion, hence it is doubtful, that the other adoptions of Bala Saheb and Rao Saheb's father Pandu Rang Rao were regular and formal. Baji Rao definitely admitted them to his family as his sons, but not as his legal heirs. Nana Saheb being the eldest and legal heir was well looked after with due attention and care, and Baji Rao gave him proper education and training to make him fit to assure the great responsibilities that would befall upon him and make him worthy as his successor to his titles and privileges.

After adoption Baji Rao named Nana as Dhondu Pant. This is confirmed by the statement given by Rao Saheb in his trial proceedings before the court at Kanpur after the Mutiny.¹⁰ The word Saheb was associated with his name as a mark of respect and greatness, in this way his full name became Nana Saheb Dhondu Pant.

Up-Bringing and Education. Nana Saheb was brought up in most luxurious surroundings and atmosphere, as the son of Peshwa Baji Rao. He took special care in up bringing and educating the child. Baji Rao had a good number of educated and learned persons at his court, he deputed the well versed Brahmans as incharge of the education of Nana and other boys, who took every care to impart the best education to the heir-apparent and other sons in a befitting way. Thus, Nana got his education in letters from the Brahmans and acquainted himself with the social, religious and educational text-books of his times.

Baji Rao used to live like a king, and he maintained a small army of elephants and horses. Besides, there was an ornamental army which served him as his protective force. Baji Rao had bestowed all attention and care on Nana Saheb like the other Indian princes of that time. Besides educational exercises, Nana learnt horse riding and elephant handling, the use of bow and arrow and gun and spear throwing. In those days beside academic knowledge the art of warlike activities was very essential. So, Nana

10. Trial proceedings in case of Rao Saheb Versus Government, Foreign Department. Political Proceedings Nos. 228-29, dated April, 1862.

made himself fully adept in all the means and methods of warlike tactics and weapons.

Sacred thread ceremony. Baji Rao was happy in the midst of his adopted sons, but he was eager to perform all religious functions and duties of a father. So just as the Nana entered the fifth year of his age, Baji Rao decided to perform his sacred thread ceremony. The sacred thread ceremony actually took place on February 8, 1829. At that time according to the age of his horoscope, he was 3 years 8 months and nineteen days old. When his age (including his days in the womb of his mother) was counted he was four years and five months. And according to Hindu religious text books, performance of the ceremony at this age was permissible and a Brahman could perform the ceremony in the fifth year of his child.¹¹

Baji Rao prepared an invitation letter and sent that to his kith and kins and many other respectable persons and heads of the prominent Maratha families. One of the invitation letters, Baji Rao sent to one Bamanaji Khandakar of Gwalior. The date written on this invitation letter was January 3, 1829 and the date of the sacred thread ceremony was February 8, 1829.

Baji Rao celebrated the sacred thread ceremony with great pomp and show and quenched his religious thirst and felt great mental satisfaction by that deed. Then he paid his attention to impart practical training to his heir. He himself was the patron of art and culture, and his court was the centre of all learned and scholarly persons. Wrestlers and body-builders were also present in his court.

Baji Rao gave education and physical training to his sons, and particularly to Nana Saheb. He also engaged scholars in different subjects to teach Nana. The pandits taught their respective topics to Nana, and he also devoted himself heart and soul to learn his lessons, and so in due course of time the Nana was well versed in Marathi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and to a great extent in English also. He learnt history, political science and literature very well. Physical exercises and study of warlike techniques and

11. Hardicar, Srinewas Balaji 'Nana Saheb Peshwa' (Delhi—1969), page 36.

tactics were regularly undertaken by him. He was also given training in diplomacy.

Manu Bai and Tatya Topa. Amongst his early playmates, were Manu Bai, and Tatya Topa who were his close associates. Nana used to learn his lessons on education and warfare with Manu and Tatya Topa. Baji Rao had patronised the parents of Manu and Tatya, and so these two, right from their infancy lived within the campus of Baji Rao, received and enjoyed the same facilities which Nana used to get. This is due to the great affection Baji Rao had for these two children along with his sons.

It so happened that, when Baji Rao surrendered to the British and settled down in Bithoor in 1818, his younger brother Chimnaji Appa also surrendered to the British. He was granted an annual pension of two lacs of rupees and Chimnaji Appa retired to Benares and there he died in 1830. After his death many of his dependants became helpless, and were left with no means of livelihood. Amongst these dependants was the family of Moropant Tamba, who left Benares and came to the shelter of Baji Rao at Brahmavarta with his wife Bhagirathi Bai, and daughter Manikarnika. The daughter Manikarnika became very favourite and Baji Rao named her as Chabili out of affection. The short name of Manikarnika was Manu, who later on became Laxmi Bai the Rani of Jhansi, and actively took part in the national uprising of 1857 with Nana and Tatya Topa and became immortal in the history of India.

Thus, Manu had come in the company of Nana in his childhood. Tatya was already present in Bithoor with his parents. The three childmates, Nana, Laxmi Bai, and Tatya, were destined to lead the nation against the British in 1857. As a matter of fact they received their preliminary training in their childhood at Bithoor.

According to customary traditions, Baji Rao appointed a teacher to impart training to Nana Saheb and Rao Saheb for their physical exercises and education. At that time Manu was with them, and alongwith Nana she also picked up the primary lessons of her books and in weapons. When Nana and Rao Saheb used to go on horse riding, Manu also used to go with them. When

Nana handled and learnt the sword, Manu also did the same. When Nana sat on the elephant, then Manu also joined him and when Nana learnt horse riding and elephant driving then she also did the same.¹² The art of fire-arms and the handling of the gun was also learnt by Nana Saheb. It was during this period that Nana read the history of India and learnt the great traditions, culture and civilization of the country. He became well acquainted with our ancient glory and its rich past; and he often felt proud of his being a descendant of that rich heritage and race. When he read the Hindu religious and philosophical books, he inherited the feelings of nationalism, sense of equality and justice. Hindu religious books like Ramayan and Mahabharat taught him the sense of duty above every thing and also patriotism which became the key note of his feelings. From the Geeta (where he read the message of God Krishna) he relished the gospel of truth and the principle of action and duty. From the Geeta he learnt that body is mortal, whereas the deeds and actions of a man are immortal. The Hindu religious philosophy taught him to live and die for the nation and for its cause, he also learnt the great theme of fearlessness and learnt never to deviate from the path of his duty and action. When he read of the glory and achievements of the past Peshwas he felt deep sorrow in his heart and longed for its revival. Often he was lost in deep meditation at the miserable plight of the Indian princes, who only fought among themselves, and never tried to unite for a common cause for the nation against the British. The Nana was very eager to fulfil the task of his predecessors to organise a common front against the British to regain the past glory. This was the spirit, that worked behind every action of Nana in 1857 uprising.

Also during this period when Nana came in contact with the British and with their literature, he learnt of their monarchical order of government with a democratic set-up of administration. He came in contact with the West through the British and saw their social, political, economic, religious and industrial way of living through their books, and by contact with them. He found a great contrast between his life and theirs. Nana learnt the trends of his time in India and abroad, and found that whereas India was

12. Parasani, D.B.-Maharani Laxmi Bai Page 16-17.

degenerating, Europe and England were advancing ahead of all. Nationalism was becoming the cementing force between all the inhabitants in the states of Europe, democracy was their social and political way of life, equality and fraternity were developing fast in those countries; whereas India was a divided house in itself. The European powers were strengthening themselves by their trade, commerce, sea power, and by following the policy of acquiring and conquering the colonies in Asia and in Africa. The land powers had become subordinate to sea-powers, and India was lagging far behind as a maritime state. Nana was much upset when he learnt of the deplorable condition of India. Being the heir and successor of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao, Nana thought it his spiritual and religious duty to fulfil the duties of Peshwaship, to organise the country to remove their sufferings and to fight for their freedom, as Peshwas did in the past, and to revive Indian culture and tradition for future prosperity and greatness. These were the feelings, under the spell of which the Nana was contemplating his future course of action while passing his days at Bithoor under the patronage and care of his adoptive father Peshwa Baji Rao. Manu and Tatya Topa, also learnt their first lessons of patriotism, bravery and sense of sacrifice from the Nana, during their days of learning and playing with each other.

His Physique. The Nana had an imposing and grand personality. He was a middle sized man, neither he was tall nor of short stature. The British government later circulated a "descriptive roll"¹³ of Nana Saheb for his arrest and reward, which gave a full description of the form and features of the Nana Saheb. According to that descriptive roll the Nana was a person of fair wheatish complexion with a height of five feet eight inches. He was well built and his physique was muscular and powerful. His face was flat and round, with a well shaped straight nose, large round eyes, regular teeth, black hair and sound body. Nana had a hairy breast,

13. The descriptive roll was prepared by the British Government full of minute details about the Nana Saheb for his arrest and with a reward of rupees one Lac and with promise of pardon, after the unsuccessful 1857 rising. The original copy was with the then government of North Western Provinces in the political department for the month of January 1861, Part 1st, page 19.

and ring marks on his ears. He used to wear a pair of gold rings in his ears according to the customs prevailing with high class respectable persons of Maharashtra.

In the descriptive roll, Nana Saheb was described as under :

Name—Nana Rao Dhondhoo Pant.

Caste—Dekhany Brahman.

Age—36 years in 1858.

Complexion—Fair.

Stature and personal appearance—5 feet 8 inches, powerful appearance and stout.

Form of face—Flat and round.

Form of nose—Straight and well shaped.

Form of eyes—Large round eyes.

Teeth—Regular.

Marks on breast—Covered with hair.

Colour of hair—Black.

Ring marks on ears—Yes.

Remarks—Has the features of a Maratha strongly depicted, on one of his toes has a lancet mark and at present by wearing a beard he presents a Mohamadan appearance. A servant with a cut-ear never leaves his side.

Azimullah Khan in his diary has given a good description of the physical form of Nana Saheb. He described Nana as a very handsome person. Sherer has also given a good account of Nana Saheb. Sherer was appointed the collector of Kanpur after its reconquest. Though Sherer had never seen Nana personally he gathered many first hand informations about Nana and then wrote his impression about him. His chief source of information was Dr. J.N. Tresidder, who was the Civil Surgeon of Kanpur at that time and who used to attend and visit Nana Saheb, when he was at Bithoor before 1857 for his treatment. Sherer has described Nana Saheb's age between thirty and forty years at the time of rising. He described him, "of middle height, solid features and

increasing stoutness. He might well have passed for the ordinary shopkeeper of the bazar, had it not been for the Maratha custom of his turban of which, however he did not affect a very pronounced type."¹⁴

An Englishman, who was a close friend of Nana, and who often visited him at Bithoor, has given a very good account of Nana. He says that at the time he saw Nana, he was really about twenty eight years of age, but he looked forty. His worries and heavy burden of responsibilities made him look like that. He says that "His face was round, his eyes restless, like those of a tiger, piercing and of great lustre, his complexion was like that of any Spaniard, his conversation was characterised by a humane¹⁵ touch.

According to Trevelyan, Nana Saheb was about 36 years of age at the time of the Mutiny. He had strongly marked features, and had a sallow complexion, that added charm to his personality and gave him a pleasing appearance. His head and face were clean shaven. He was rather fat in built.¹⁶

John Lang had been the guest of Nana Saheb at Bithoor, when he visited that place in his travels in India. He stayed with Nana Saheb for some days. He had given his impression in his book¹⁷ that Nana Saheb was not a man of ability or a fool.

Mowbray Thomson in his book "story of Cawnpore" (London 1899) has also given the description of Nana Saheb that 'Nana was exceedingly corpulent, of sallow complexion of middle height with thoroughly marked features and like all Marathas clean shaven on both head and face.

Some writers have also stated that Nana had small-pox spots on his face but this is not correct, as a female servant named Adala gave her statement before the Trial Court in 1875, in the proceedings

14. Sherer, J.W. Havelock's March on Cawnpur—1857, (London 1898), page 22.

15. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 133.

16. Trevelyan, Sir G.Q. Cawnpore—(London—1899) page 15-16.

17. John Lang has given his impressions in his book "Wanderings in India and other sketches of life in Hindustan" (London—1859).

of a person named Jamana Das, who was by mistake caught as the Nana. She said that the Nana was a handsome man, his facial colour was neither white nor black. His face was round and attractive. He was powerfully built. He had no spots of small-pox on his face. It was also stated in the same trial that Nana had a broad upright forehead. He stammered a bit while speaking. He had a black mole below the eyelid of his right eye.¹⁸

His Hospitality. Nana Saheb was very hospitable.¹⁹ He was generous and large-hearted man, and was always ready to extend his helping hand to the needy and the poor. After Baji Rao's death when he assumed the responsibilities of the ex-Peshwa and was the head of the family, he retained everything²⁰ as was left by the deceased, and in spite of his financial difficulties, he himself did not ask any one to leave. He continued to extend his patronage and favour to Brahmans, learned persons and to all men of letters, whosoever sought his protection and care. As a gentleman he was always very courteous to Englishmen. It is quite a different matter that he hated the British and their rule. He did entertain the feelings of hatred towards the English regime and nation as a whole, but as an individual, he never hated any Englishman. British officers, for change of climate and place generally visited Bithoor as guests of Nana Saheb who always received them with affection. At the time of their departure he used to make presents to them. These humanly qualities of Nana Saheb endeared him very much amongst the British officers and gentry at Kanpur and elsewhere. These British officers used to visit Bithoor with their wives and children, and enjoyed the company of Nana Saheb. He believed in the principle of hating the sin and not the sinner.

Trevelyan had all praise for Nana Saheb when he wrote that "Nothing could exceed the cordiality which he constantly displayed in his intercourse with our countrymen. The persons in authority placed an implicit confidence in his friendliness and good faith, and the ensigns emphatically pronounced him a capital fellow. He had a nod or a kind word for every Saheb in the station, hunting:

18 Trial proceedings—Cawnpore Collectorate Records, Freedom struggle. in U.P., Volume III, page 680.

19. Thomson Captain Mowbray—*Op. Cit.*, page 48.

20. Sherer, J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, Volume I, page 223.

parties and jewellery for the men, and picnics and shawls for the ladies. If a Subaltern's wife required change of air, the Rajah's carriage was at the service of the young couple and the European apartments of Bithoor were put in order to receive them. If a civilian had overworked himself in court, he had but to speak the word and the Rajah's elephants were sent on to the Oude jungles."²¹

English visitors, and officials have acknowledged in their writings that Nana Saheb was fond of entertaining the English gentry, in the parties, which he used to organise in the European style in his mansion at Bithoor. Elephant arrangements were made and rich meals coupled with dance and music were provided to them all.²² On such occasions Nana Saheb would dress himself in Khimkhah and Kashmir scarf and would wear the Marathi styled head-dress studded with pearls and diamonds. He would also carry the old Baji Rao's State sword, which was valued at three lacs of rupees at that time.²³

The same sword of Peshwa Baji Rao is in the National Collection, New Delhi now-a-days.

Temperament and Habits. Azimullah Khan in his diary has stated that Nana Saheb regarded any elderly lady as his mother, and any lady equal in his age as a sister. Similarly, he respected elderly man as father and considered persons of his own age as brother. He entertained evenly and affectionate regards for all, and in return, he received others love and sympathy in a cordial way.

Being born in a Brahman family he was orthodox in temperament and religious in his habits. He had special veneration and pious feeling for river Ganga. At the time of his bathing or washing or worshipping near the Ganga, Nana would not enter the water without first washing his feet and hands. Nana had so much regard and esteem for the sacred Ganga, that people in Bithoor spread exaggerated accounts, that mother Ganga was very much pleased with Nana Saheb. Nana respected the old traditions and

21. Trevelyan, Sir G.O.—*Op. Cit.*, page 31-32.

22. Hardikar, Srinewas Balaji—*Op. Cit.*, page 42.

23. Thomson, Captain Mowbray—*The story of Cawnpore (London—1859)*, page 28.

culture very much, and always gave due regard to them. He regularly observed the religious observations and performed his pious duties sincerely. As a matter of fact he followed the traditional line of the Peshwas in all his deeds and actions, and presented himself as the true representative of that exalted family.

Nana was well versed in Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu, yet he had sufficient knowledge of English to understand that language. He was fond of knowing the events of his times, and so subscribed and got all the leading Anglo-Indian newspapers and had them read out to him daily in the morning.

Besides being a good swordsman and a horse-rider of his time he was a very good player of billiards. He played the game of billiard very appreciably while he was active enough to bend over the playing table conveniently. While playing this game he got ample opportunity of meeting the British military officers stationed at Kanpur.²⁴

(4) *Nana Assumed full responsibilities*

Nana's living was simple and pious in accordance with the ideal of simple living and high thinking. He was a quiet unostentatious young man, not at all addicted to any extravagant habits. He was simple in his ways, but liked to wear impressive neat and clean dress and jewellery.²⁵ In the matter of religion he was orthodox, but far from being a bigot. He was tolerant towards other religions and he had great respect for Christianity as a religion. On one occasion he was seen accompanying a regiment of Kanpur to Church on a Sunday Prayer.²⁶

Nana had a strong sense of affection for the depressed and oppressed. He was very sensitive to maintain his honour and dignity, and it was for this feeling, that on his part he avoided, return invitations from the European officers of Kanpur. It was also because of the fact, that since the British government stopped to give the gun fire salute to Nana and also discontinued his privileges, which Baji Rao had enjoyed during his exile. Nana was eager to

24. Trevedyan, Sir G.O.—*Op. Cit.*, page 41.

25. Gupta, Rajnikant Sipahi Judher Hihās (Bangali) Vol. Ist, page 95.

26. Lang, John—*Op. Cit.*, page 116.

retain and maintain the glory of the house of the Peshwaship at any cost during his life time.

Nana was very fond of keeping different types of animals in his well maintained zoo. Deer, gazelles, camels, panthers, monkeys, squirrels, dogs, cats, horses, rabbits and other kinds of animals of special varieties were the attraction of his zoo. Nana had a large and well-maintained stable of horses, elephants and camels, and used to enjoy their riding and shows. Himself a very good sportsman, the Nana was excellent in horsemanship. Nana was specially fond of horses, and hence there were high-bred horses in his stable.

Even after the death of Baji Rao, and the stoppage of his pension by the British, Nana well maintained his palace and surroundings befitting his dignity and honour. His drawing room was decorated with mirrors and chandeliers imported from England. He had a vast store of gold and silver plates, ready for his service on all occasions. He had an enormous stock of jewellery and costly Kashmiri shawls. Trevelyan in his writings²⁷ has witnessed them all.

Nana had his own personal army, that he was allowed to keep for his protection and safety. The number of his retainues was in several hundred. He used to give them monthly salary and clothes annually. They were also provided with swords, lances and matchlocks. A part of this retinue was provided with horses.²⁸

Nana Saheb was very much fond of collection of arms. It was his hobby to purchase different kinds of swords, that were made of the best tempered steel. He also gathered long-range rifles and big guns of different sizes. He used to supervise and test them personally and after inspection provided them to his troops. Trevelyan says that Nana Saheb's armoury had a rare collection of arms and fighting weapons of every age and country. He had also his well equipped library, which contained rich books on Hindu religion, literature and Sanskrit.

27. Travelyan, Sir G.O.—*Op. Cit.*, page 42.

28. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.* page 133.

Many of these weapons and Nana's animals were taken away by the British on the sack²⁹ of Bithoor after 1857. An English soldier took possession of a pair of thorough-bred English bull-dogs of Nana Saheb. Mr. J.W. Sherer, the then District Magistrate of Kanpur after 1857 was with General Havelock on his march to Kanpur at the time of the 1857 rising. He obtained a big squirrel, and tried to maintain that but to his great sorrow, the squirrel died after some time.³⁰

Nana was in constant touch with, and knowledge of all the political happenings in India of his times. He was very much grieved at the way the British were treating the Indian states and devouring them one by one. When Avadh was annexed, Nana felt very sorry for that and expressed his view that a war would one day be the result of all these foul deeds of the British. Nana by that time had developed his full personality and was intelligent enough to ponder over them thoroughly.

Raghunath Rao Bichurkar³¹, a Maratha Sardar of Maharashtra, visited Bithoor during his pilgrimage of the north, stayed in Bithoor while going and also while returning home. He wrote his impressions of his pilgrimage and also his observations at Bithoor. He says that he had developed a friendly attachment with Nana, both being of the same age and temperament. Nana used to live a very regular and well-maintained life. After his regular prayer and breakfast he used to be present on the parade ground with his soldiers to witness the parade and did his personal exercises as well. At that time Raghunath Rao Bichurkar was also present there. Horseriding and swordsmanship were performed daily at 7 A.M. there in full exercise. Gun fire also used to take place. After the exercises were over, the author used to take his lunch with Nana in a separate room, where Nana lived.

29. Groom, W.T.—With Havelock from Allahabad to Lucknow (London 1894), pp. 41-42.
30. Sherer, J.W. 'Havelock's March on Cawnpore' (London 1898) page 48.
31. Tirth-Yatra Praband (तीर्थयात्रा प्रबन्ध) a Marathi manuscript, yet unpublished, written by Raghunath Rao Bichurker. Its original copy is preserved with Indian History Research Council, Poona.

According to traditional customs prevailing with royal houses of that time, Nana also kept dancing girls and female attendants at his court. Adala and Bhima, the two dancing women of Nana were well known at that time for their dancing and singing. Raghunath Rao Bichurkar has given a good account of these dancing occasions, and has stated that occasionally, such dancing parties were witnessed at Nana's residence even late in the night. This amply illustrates the fact, that Nana was a great lover of fine arts, singing, dancing, and music. This also shows the fact that whereas Nana was a hard realist, and practical man, he was sentimental and emotional too.

His succession. After Baji Rao's death Nana inherited the property of the deceased. He was the first in the order of succession, but unfortunately his right was disputed by the widows of Baji Rao and by other relations. The minor daughters of the ex-Peshwa also filed their own claim.

The report of Mr. Morland, the then Collector and Magistrate of Kanpur showed that there were thirty inmates who were dependent upon the Nana and were living with him at Bithoor. In addition to them, there were twenty six widows of the adherents of the deceased Peshwa, who were also dependent upon the Nana.

The immediate members of Baji Rao's family at that time were as under :

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---|--------------------|
| (1) | Ganga Dhar Rao | — | second adopted son |
| (2) | Pandu Rung Rao (Rao Saheb) | | grand son |
| (3) | Maina Bai | — | first widow |
| (4) | Tayee Bai | — | second widow |
| (5) | Yoga Bai | — | first daughter |
| (6) | Kossooma Bai | — | second daughter |
| (7) | Chemmuji Appa | — | grand nephew. |

Mr. Morland in his report stated that all the immediate members of ex-Peshwa's family had their separate establishment and they all became completely dependent on Nana Saheb. As regards the ex-Peshwa's property the report stated that the estimated value of the property recorded in Company's paper was sixteen lacs. The

Government Promissory Notes yielded an annual income of Rs. 80,000, besides jewels, plates and ornaments, valued at rupees eleven lacs, and the gold in the treasury with Nana valued at rupees three lacs. The report also stated that a greater part of the item of gold was paid in satisfying the current debts, and much money was utilised towards the expenses of ex-Peshwa's last rites.

After giving these particulars, Mr. Morland recommended that a portion of Baji Rao's pension be continued for the support of his family and adherents. But Lt. Governor did not agree to Mr. Morland's recommendation about the continuance of the pension, and his views were endorsed and supported by the Governor General Lord Dalhousie and finally the pension of Nana Saheb was stopped.

Succession to title seal and Jagir. Though the Nana's right to the pension was refused by the British government, his personal rights to inherit the property of the ex-Peshwa was not denied to him. So, the Nana as the son and successor of Baji Rao II began to use the title of Baji Rao, 'Maharaja', for himself and had his own seals prepared in that style. He asked for the permission of the government to use for his personal attendants, the badge bearing the inscription of the purport, that the attendants were his servants. Lord Dalhousie refused³² the request of the Nana and even the badges for his attendants were disallowed. Nana Saheb was much annoyed and disturbed. After careful considerations he made a representation that was well reasoned, balanced and based on reality, (to the Governor General) praying for reconsideration of his request. But his representation was rejected and the Nana was left with the simple description, as Sriman Nana Dhondu Pant Bahadur³³.

The British further offended the Nana by granting only a life interest³⁴ in the jagir left by Baji Rao II. This was unjust and

32. Foreign Political consultations—No. 68 dated 30 Dec. 1858. National Archives, New Delhi.

33. Foreign Political consultations, 16th Dec. 1853, No. 106, National Archives, New Delhi.

34. The Government of India in February 1852 passed an Act repealing the Regulation of 1832 and granted to the Nana only the life interest in the Bithoor lands.

unfair. The Nana's interests in the Jagir were limited and restricted, and he did not enjoy the full rights in the property. Neither he could sell nor could he dispose that off. As the legal heir, he should have been given the full and absolute powers in the Jagir. However, the jagir was to remain rent-free, subject to the Nana's residing at Bithoor only.

The Nana as a common man. The Government gave yet another blow to the Nana's prestige, by withdrawing Regulation of 1832 by which Baji Rao II and his retinue and other persons living within the limits of his jagir were exempted from the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts. The repeal was done by a Regulation, passed by the Governor-General in Council in February, 1852.

The Nana was deprived of all judicial powers and privileges and he was made a subject to British rules, regulations and laws and was to be governed by them. He became an ordinary citizen of the British in India. The British discontinued the annual supply of one thousand rounds of blank musket cartridges, which during the time of Baji Rao II were given to Subedar Ram Chandra Pant. Though Mr. Morland recommended the continuance of the blank cartridges, since the same were used on the occasion of the birth anniversary of God Hanuman, this plea was rejected by the Lt. Governor of N.W. Provinces and the supply was stopped forthwith.

The Nana from all sides found himself humiliated and helpless and without any hope. But he did not lose courage and determined with firm resolution to repair the wrong, by any means at his disposal.

Azimullah Khan as his Dewan. The Nana was a man of iron will and fortitude. He developed certain disputes and distrust for Narain Rao, son of Subedar Ram Chandra Pant, and so the Nana did not allow Narain Rao to remain as his Dewan, and appointed in his place Azimullah³⁵ as his Dewan for the management of his Jagir. Azimullah thereupon took the vow that he would ever remain faithful and loyal to his master Nana Saheb, and that he would serve him honestly throughout his life. Azimullah remained.

35. Thomson, Capt. Mowbray—*Op. Cit.*, page 54.

faithfully towards his master throughout and fulfilled the vow that he had taken at that time. Azimullah took active part³⁶ in the national rising of 1857 and became immortal, with the Nana in Indian History.

The Nana first made up his mind to fight his case in law courts according to the procedure laid down by the British for their subjects in India. He engaged himself for that task and started gathering facts for his case.

(5) *His disputes with family members*

While the Nana was busy in his legal fight with the British, he found himself engrossed in family disputes³⁷ from the side of members of ex-Peshwa's house hold with the death of Baji Rao II, the ex-Peshwa's family fomented internal disputes, because Baji Rao's widows, daughters and other relations claimed to be the rightful owner of the ex-Peshwa's vast property and wealth. They did not recognise the right of inheritance of the Nana and even disputed his adoption as a son of Baji Rao II. They regarded Nana Saheb and his brother as of quite a different family and not a part and parcel of the ex-Peshwa's household.

Thus, the ex-Peshwa's household was divided between two distinct camps. One was the group of all those, who once were cognates of Baji Rao and had their blood and marriage relations with him. The second group was that of Nana Saheb and his family members, including Rao Saheb and Ganga Dhar Rao Saheb. The prominent of the first camp were, the two widows of Baji Rao, Maina Bai and Tayee Bai, the two daughters of Baji Rao, Yoga Bai and Kossooma Bai and Chammuji Appa, the son of Kavari Bai who was the daughter of Chimnaji Appa; the brother of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II. They considered that Nana, his brother and nephew and their families had no direct right in the family property. They, therefore, decided to deprive Nana and his family

36. Shepherd, W.J.—A personal Narrative of the Out-break and Massacre at Cawnpore during Sepoy Revolt of 1857 (Lucknow 1879—1886) page 14.

37. Foreign Department Miscellaneous Records. Volume No. 383 of 1857-58. Consultation Document No. 23.

members of any right upon the Jagir and property through legal suits in the British court against the Nana.

The Nana had already taken control of all the affairs of his jagir in his own hands, and was also in full possession of the treasure and wealth. So, he decided to contest the suit.

The main persons who were in league with the widows of ex-Peshwa, was Nanak Chand. He was the Chief sponsor of their cause. He was in the service of Ishwar Chand, a wealthy man of Kanpur, who was also against the Nana. Their lawyers were Dargabilal, Shadilal and Shekh Muzzafar Hussain. Besides these there were many British officers, who were against the Nana and so they directly and indirectly helped and encouraged them.

The first to complaint against the Nana were Maina Bai, and Tayee Bai, the two widows of Baji Rao II. They complained that the Nana had taken possession of all their property and jewellery and had deprived them of all their rights and powers and that the Nana had placed them under his direct control and supervision and that their movements were restrained and their liberty cut short.

The British government on receiving the complaint, investigated the whole affair and came to the conclusion that the complaint was false and was not based on facts. So, the government rejected the complaint and informed the two widows that the Nana was the adopted son of Baji Rao II and that he was the real heir of his property and wealth, therefore the two widows were asked to acknowledge him as the head of the family and give him all respect and obedience as such. When the two widows received the flat refusal from the government, they had no resort except to abide by the wishes and regularities of Nana Saheb, who was very honest in his dealings with them.

Another complaint was filed against the Nana on behalf of the daughters of the ex-Peshwa. Both the daughters were minor and unmarried. The complaint was lodged by Athwale, the father of the two widows of Baji Rao II, and the grandfather of the two minor daughters of Baji Rao II. It was presumed that the two

widows, the mother of the daughters had their direct hand in the complaint which they did, when they lost their case.³⁸

The plea was taken that in the absence of any natural born-son of Baji Rao II the daughters be recognised as legal successors³⁹ of the deceased and that the Nana be not recognised as the head of the family nor as the adopted son. They pleaded that the two daughters were the legal heirs of the property of Baji Rao II according to Hindu Law.⁴⁰

The government, however, did not accept the complaint and rejected the application, informing the two daughters and Athwala that the Nana was the adopted son of Baji Rao II and that he was the de-facto and de-jure head of the Peshwa's family, and that the two daughters were completely under the control and management of Nana Saheb.

The third complaint⁴¹ was filed by young Chamuji Appa, the grandson of Chimnaji Appa the brother of Baji Rao II. He also pleaded that the Nana was not the adopted son of Baji Rao and hence in the absence of any natural heir he (*i.e.*, Chamnaji Appa) was in line of succession. He also claimed half share in the property of Baji Rao II and also his share in the treasure and wealth. But the British Government rejected his claim as well and upheld the right of Nana Saheb.

38. Aitcheson—*Op. Cit.*, Volume II, pp. 122-23.

39. Aitcheson—*Op. Cit.*, Volume II, pp. 122-23.

40. *Abid.* " "

41. *Abid.* " "

CHAPTER IV

Non-Acceptance of Nana Saheb's Rights by the East India Company and its Repercussions

Non-acceptance of Nana Saheb's right by the Company and its repercussions.

Nana Saheb was fighting a losing battle. There was no hope from the British granting him any concession. He had made all efforts and had left no stone unturned in his pursuit to gain a portion of the pension, which the ex-Peshwa enjoyed during his life time. But it proved of no avail. Yet he did not lose his heart and continued his endeavour and legal battle for his rights against the British.

The British Finally rejected the Nana's right. Though he had received the decision of the British Government about the stoppage of his pension¹ yet he went on knocking at their doors. But the British did not hear his voice. The British Government followed the same policy in the case of Chimnaji Appa, the younger brother of Baji Rao II, who was also granted a pension of two lakhs of rupees at the time of his surrender and when he died in 1830 at Benares, his pension was stopped and his heirs were not granted any thing after his death. Still then Nana was hopeful on the ground that his case was more genuine.

1. Agra Narratives, Foreign Department, April, 1856 to December, 1857, Secretariat Records Office, U.P. Lucknow. Narrative of the Proceedings of the Hon'ble Lieut. Governor of the N.W.P. in the Political Department, Collection No. 16.

The rights and titles of the Nana as vested in him by the written testament. He had the will² of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II written in his favour, and that will was only recognised and acknowledged by the British. So it was rather unjustified and improper to acknowledge one half that is the operative portion of the will as acceptable to the British and the other half as un-acceptable. The British recognised the Nana as the legal heir to all personal property of Baji Rao II, but refused to acknowledge for him any right to his pension. The Nana had acquired the testamentary succession by will, which was inalienable and hence enforceable and operative in toto.³ The Nana relied very much on this factor and was hopeful of good results. Justice Wilson had stated that 'English rules of construction have grown up side by side with a very special law of property, and a very artificial system of conveyancing...'. It is a very serious thing to use such rules in interpreting the instruments of the Hindus, who view most transactions from a different point, think differently and speak differently from Englishmen.⁴

The Nana was hopeful that the sense of justice would prevail upon the British and that they would appreciate his practical difficulties and the British would ultimately do justice. In his efforts the Nana represented his case first to Lt. Governor of N.W. Provinces, then to the Governor General of India, and finally to the court of Directors of the East India Company in London, but all his representations were rejected⁵ and so all his hopes were doomed to disappointment. This made the Nana very much annoyed and furious. He resolved to make his last bid and decided to send his own Dewan Azimullah Khan in person to present his case before the British Government in England. The Nana busied himself for that preparation and made all requisite arrangements for sending his representative there.

2. Foreign Political Consultation, 16th December, 1853, No. 106, National Archives, New Delhi, and Agra Narratives Foreign Department 1844-1852, Secretariat Records office, U.P., Lucknow.
3. Mulla, Sir D.F.—*Op. Cit.*, section 392, page 457.
4. *Ibid.* Section 399, page 462.
5. Representations of the Nana Reproduced in Appendix.

The Hindu Social and religious background on the issue of adoption.

The Nana's case was both genuine and right. He was contesting his case in accordance with the Hindu Law. It was his legal, moral, social and religious duty to fight for his right. He, as the heir and adopted son of Baji Rao II, was duty-bound to fulfil the desires and wishes of the deceased and to discharge his duties, as were expected of him by the religion.

An adopted son had all the legal, moral and ethical rights conferred on him by virtue of his being the adopted son, and in all his duties and functions, he acted as a natural son for his adoptive father. The institution of adoption was very old and had its origin in antiquity. The ancient Hindu text books have sanctioned and loudly acknowledged the institution of adoption of a son as legal, valid and justified. Hindu religious text books laid down certain rules and regulations for the smooth working of the society. It also laid down the rules and regulations for the individual to lead his life in a way that was based on a complete co-ordination of an individual and society. The whole conception of Hindu society is thus based on purely ethical, scientific and social conceptions of the well-being of one and all according to Hindu ideology of society and of an individual.

The society is classified into four parts^a according to its capacity of work and power supported by quality of inner and outer

6. चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्य कर्ता रमयन्म् ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता अध्याय 4 श्लोक 13 पृष्ठ 87—अर्थ—

गुण और कर्मों के विभाग से ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय, वैश्य और शूद्र मेरे द्वारा (भगवान् कृष्ण के द्वारा) रचे गये हैं—

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणै ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता अध्याय 18 श्लोक 41, पृष्ठ-311—अर्थ—

ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय, वैश्य तथा शूद्रों के भी कर्म स्वभाव से उत्पन्न हुए गुणों द्वारा विभक्त किये गये हैं ।

talents. The well being of all, supported by ethical and metaphysical conceptions was the driving force behind the social classification in the Indian society since antiquity. This life's time-table⁷ was also according to well-being and all sided prosperity of an individual based on ethical and metaphysical aspects of Hindu ideology, termed as 'Dharma'.⁸ This 'Dharma' or duty was an inevitable part of every individual. Since the Indian Society was primarily a theocratic one and more so the upper classes or the orthodox Brahmans were very theocratic, so Baji Rao and Nana Saheb observed these Brahmanical observations very strictly in order to salvage themselves from this world to find the path of the heaven.

The first period (Brahmcharya) was to be devoted for education and the second one was to enter the family life and to beget a son. The main purpose of the family life was to beget a son. To beget a son was an inevitable duty of an individual who had entered the family life. The son was to carry on the lineage of the family and to emancipate his father and fore-fathers from the

7. मनुस्मृति टीकाकार पं० गणेशदत्त पाठक=अध्याय 3, श्लोक 2, पृष्ठ 69 में ब्रह्मचर्य आश्रम की व्यवस्था, अध्याय 3 के श्लोक 4 पृष्ठ 69 में गृहस्थ आश्रम की व्यवस्था, अध्याय 4 के श्लोक 1 में ब्रह्मचर्य और गृहस्थ का वर्णन है, एवं अध्याय 6 के श्लोक 33 पृष्ठ 209 में संन्यास आश्रम और वानप्रस्थ आश्रम की व्यवस्था है।

(1) ब्रह्मचर्य आश्रम (2) गृहस्थ आश्रम (3) वानप्रस्थ आश्रम
(4) संन्यास आश्रम

प्रथमः अजित विद्या, द्वितीयः अजिता धनम्।

तृतीयं अजितार्थं धर्मः, चतुर्थं तदनन्तरम्॥

अर्थ=प्रथम आश्रम ब्रह्मचर्य में विद्या अजित करना, द्वितीय आश्रम गृहस्थ में गृहस्थ जीवन में प्रवेश कर पुत्र प्राप्त करना, तृतीय आश्रम वानप्रस्थ में धर्म अजित करना और चतुर्थ आश्रम संन्यास में अन्य कार्य करके मुक्ति प्राप्त करना।

8. Baji Rao II was a man of learning and observed all the customs and traditions of the Hindu culture and religion. He carried with him the good accomplishments of that Brahmanical house of Maharashtra to which the Peshwas belonged. So, he was essentially a religious man. He was very much guided by his religious thinking. It was his religious duty that he adopted the Nana, so as to salvage his ancestors, even after his death.

hell by doing religious rites in their name and for their sake.⁹ Thus to obtain a son as envisaged in the Vedas was the social and religious duty of an individual who led the family life, otherwise it had its abverse effects.¹⁰

The son is the direct descent of the deceased to give spiritual benefit to the departed soul and to perform 'Siradh' (श्राद्ध) ceremony according to Hindu rites¹¹ and customs. In the course of Siradh ceremony the performer presents those different kinds of offerings to his deceased ancestor, namely, (i) Pinda Offering (पिण्डदान) (ii) Pinda Lepa (पिण्ड लेप) or the oblation offerings

9. पुनाम्नो नरकाध्यस्मात्त्रायते पितर सुतः ।

तस्मापुत्र इति प्रोक्तः स्वयमेव स्वयंभुवा ॥

मनुस्मृति अध्याय 9 का श्लोक 138, पृष्ठ 367

अर्थ - पुत्र अथवा लड़का पुं० नामक नरक से पितरों का उद्धार करता है ।
इसलिए स्वयं ब्रह्माजी ने लड़के को पुत्र कहा है ।

10. कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।

धर्मो नष्टे कुले कृतानमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥

गीता अध्याय 1 का श्लोक, 40 पृष्ठ 34—अर्थ = पुत्र के न होने पर, कुल के नाश होने से सनातन कुल धर्म नष्ट हो जाते हैं और धर्म के नाश होने से से कुल को पाप भी बहुत दबा देता है । इस प्रकार धर्म और कुल धर्म के लिए पुत्र आवश्यक है ।

11. सकरो नरकायैव, कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।

पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां, लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥

गीता-अध्याय 1 का श्लोक 42 पृष्ठ, 34—अर्थ = वर्णशंकर कुलघातियों को और कुल को नरक में ले जाते हैं, और पिण्ड और जल की क्रिया लोप हो जाती है और पितर लोग गिर जाते हैं—इस प्रकार पिण्ड को जल के लिए पुत्र की आवश्यकता है ।

11. The Hindu mythology says that a man who does not beget a son, does not obtain the eternal salvation after his death. The head of the family does not get peace while living and is not entitled to heaven after his death. So, in order to save the family from extinction the provision of adoption of a son is incorporated in the religious text books of the Hindu Society. Baji Rao II was driven by this consideration when he adopted the Nana as his adopted son.

(iii) Tarpan (तर्पण) which means, libations of water¹² to the deceased.

It is, because for Siradha and Tarpan to the deceased soul, that Hindu Laws have laid greater emphasis on the importance of begetting a son. So, for social benefits while living and for spiritual benefits after death, a son is an indispensable organ of a man.

Women or daughters are devoid of this privilege and hence incompetent to perform these duties. Also Hindu Law ordinarily does not recognise the right of a female to inherit a male, and hence the law of inheritance does not confer the right of inheritance on women. In this respect also the male heir is indispensable.

It was under these psychological social and religious backgrounds, that when Baji Rao II, did not beget any natural son, he adopted Nana Saheb as his (adopted) son, and Nana Saheb under these psychological, social, religious and ethical circumstances fully assumed all the rights and duties as heir and successor of Baji Rao II.

The institution of adoption is an old and antique custom, having its sanction in Hindu religious books. The Hindu Laws contemplated that a man could adopt¹³ a son for himself, who did not have a natural son for his social, religious, ethical and spiritual purposes.

So, Baji Rao II's adoption of the Nana was not illegal in any way. He had religious and spiritual reasons for his adopting Nana.

12. Mulla, Sir D.F.—*Op. Cit.*, Doctrine of spiritual benefit, sections 79, 80, page 95.

13. माता पिता वा दद्यातः यमदिभ पुत्रमापदि ।

सदृशं प्रीतिसंयुक्त से ज्ञेयो दत्त्रिमः सुतः ॥

मनुस्मृति- अध्याय 9 का श्लोक 168 पृष्ठ 372 अर्थ = माता-पिता जिस सजातीय पुत्र को अपनी खुशी से जलोत्सर्ग द्वारा किसी पुत्राभावरूपी आपद्-ग्रस्त को देते हैं उस पुत्र को दत्तक पुत्र कहते हैं ।

14. दद्यान्माता पिता वायं स पुत्रो दत्तको भवेत् ।

याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृति —श्लोक 30 दायविभाग प्रकरण, पृष्ठ 213

Saheb. So was the case with the Nana, who was under social, religious, spiritual and ethical obligations to fulfill the task, that came upon him as being the adopted son and successor of the deceased Peshwa.

This fully justifies the actions of the Nana who had sufficient reasons to condemn the act of the British in not accepting his rights to the pension and property of the deceased. This was also the responsibility of the Nana to justify the confidence and trust reposed on him by Baji Rao II to fight for his cause and to protect his interests in the legacy.

Nana sends his emissary to England and Europe. Before making up his mind for his final decision, on his future course, the Nana decided to send his personal representative to present his case for reconsideration and review before the Court of Directors of East India Company, and also before the British Government in England. His personal representative was his Dewan Azimullah Khan.

Azimullah was in the service of the Nana and was very faithful and trustworthy. The Nana decided to send him to England with all the relevant papers.

Very little is known about Azimullah's early life. However, Captain Mowbray Thomson, in his book 'The story of Cawnpore' page 54, writes that "Azimmullah was originally a Waiter at table, Khitmatgar, in some Anglo-Indian family, profiting by the opportunity thus afforded him, he acquired a thorough acquaintance with the English and the French languages, so as to be able to read and converse fluently and write accurately in them both. He afterwards became a pupil and subsequently a teacher in the Cawnpore Government School and from the last named position he was selected to become the Vakeel or prime agent of the Nana."

W.J.A. Shepherd in his book "Personal Narrative of the outbreak and Massacre at Cownpore" (during the days of mutiny), writes on page 14, that "This Azimullah Khan was a charity boy, having been picked up together with his mother during the famine of 1837-38, they were both in a dying state from starvation. The mother being a staunch Mohammadan would not consent to her

son, then quite a boy being Christened. He was educated in the Cawnpore Free School under Mr. Paton, the schoolmaster, and received a subsistence of Rs. 5/- per month. His mother earned her own livelihood by serving as Ayat or maidservant. After 10 years study, Azimullah was promoted as a teacher in the same school, and two years after, he was made over as a Monshee to Brigadier Scott, who in his turn made him over to his successors, (when leaving the station). Brigadier Ashburnham; when Azimullah misbehaved he was turned out under the accusation of bribery and corruption, subsequently he attached himself to Nana."

The team that left for England comprised of three persons, namely Azimullah Khan, Raja Piraji Bhosley and Mohammad Ali. The team left for England in the summer of 1853 by sea-route. Raja Piraji Bhosley who was also a trusted lieutenant of Nana Saheb, could not withstand the adverse effects of the sea-climate and of the sea-journey and therefore fell ill. Though Azimullah being the chief of the team did his best to provide him with all the available medical aid, but all his efforts proved of no avail and Raj Piraji Bhosley died on his way in the ship. Azimullah bore the tragedy with a heavy heart and continued his journey with his other mate Mohammad Ali. After reaching England, Azimullah Khan had a personal survey of the political situation there. Lord John Russell, Lord Palmeston, and Lord Aberdeen were very influential at that time, holding respectable posts in the government in different capacities. Lord Palmeston's position was very strong, but his strong temperament was not liked by many in political hierarchy in England. There were party feuds amongst party statesmen. England was in the grip of Russian fear in the Eastern front. Azimullah met all the leading personalities in England and presented his master's case before them and pleaded for justice. He saw many members of the British Parliament and stated the full position to them. His main aim was to attract their attention towards his master's case. His main pleading was that the Nana did not get justice from the British and that it was a great disgrace to the British Judiciary to deprive the Nana of his legitimate right. Azimullah lived there like a great aristocrat, spent lavishly, gave many grand parties to high gentry of Britain and created such a grand impression upon their minds that many thought of him to be an Indian King.

Nature had endowed him with sweet temperament, attractive features and well cultured manners. These qualities coupled with his gentle behaviour combined in him a charming personality. It became easy for him to have close and intimate access to rich and influential families of London of that time. Even his money and pleasing personality made him favourite to many women and good ladies of high families¹⁴ there. He even established his love relations with some of the ladies there. Lord Roberts, a British officer in India at that time, wrote to his sister on December 31, 1857 "while searching over the Nana's Palace at Bithoor the other day, we found heaps of letters directed to that friend Azimullah Khan by ladies in England."¹⁵ Lord Roberts in his narration further writes that a young girl at Brighton wrote her letter in a very loveable manner to Azimullah. Some ladies even expressed their desire to marry him.

Such was the influence that Azimullah created there for himself, but he did not get success in his main aim. He was unable to arouse any response for his master's case. He met the Queen, ministers, advisers and the Directors of the East India Company. But none paid any serious heed to his request. The seasoned British politicians, only looked upon India as a happy hunting ground. Britain did not like the idea of disapproving the stand taken by the British administration in India. Azimullah lost all hopes of gaining any ground for his master and so after a prolonged stay there, decided to return in 1855.

But unlike an average man, he did not sail straight to India, but sailed to Europe according to the directions given to him by his master, Nana Saheb.

During his return journey, Azimullah was joined by Rango Bapu Gupta, who had also gone to England to present the case of his master, the deposed Chatrapati Pratap singh of Satara. He also met with the same kind of failure of his mission. None listened to him in England. He was also frustrated, angry and full of gloom. In his utter frustration he was keen to take revenge on the

14. Sen, Dr. S.N., "Eighteen Fifty Seven"—page 127.

15. Roberts, Field-Marshal Earl—"Letters written during the Indian Mutiny" (London 1924), page 120.

British. He fully agreed with Azimullah Khan to organise all the dissatisfied and alienated elements in India against the British and to retaliate for their injustice. When they went to England their hearts were full of hopes, but when they returned, they were full of disdain and despair for the British. They became the deadliest enemies of Great Britain and they decided to take up the cause of their nation and to work for it.

The Nana had asked Azimullah to return via continental Europe. Azimullah visited France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Egypt¹⁶ and the other places in Europe. He first went to France. There he studied the situation, knew many political factors and met many persons of weight and renown. In France he made a propaganda for the Indian cause and tried to create an atmosphere of sympathy and goodwill in France for India. He went to the extent of demand of military and financial help at the hour of India's need.

France was already staggering under the impact of 1848 revolution. Louis Philippe was overthrown, and a Republic was established. But the coup'd'etat of 1851, brought to an end the short lived Republic and established the reign of Louis Napoleon III in France. A period of liberation and benevolence started in France. The people's rights were recognised and a period of repose, prosperity and security began. Azimullah saw France, the birth place of liberty, fraternity, equality and nationality. He was much influenced by that, and decided to convey those ideal messages to the Indians.

When Azimullah Khan visited Germany he found a spirit of liberation from the old bondages of slavery and oppressions. Germany had also seen the upheavels of 1848 revolution. A great spirit of Nationalism was emerging there with great rapidity and force. Azimullah realised that there the people as a whole, from a common man to a high class gentleman, all equally eager to see their country united and strong. The movement for the unification

16. Thapliyal, H.P. "The Great National uprising of 1857", page—43.

of the Germany¹⁷ was going on. Azimullah realised to infuse the same kind of spirit into the hearts of Indians as well.

The same intensity, force and desire for the unification of Italy was also visible throughout Italy. The Italian nation rose as one man for that great task. In Italy too Azimullah saw the fiery spirit of liberty prevailing everywhere.¹⁸ He wished his own motherland to be in that form also.

Azimullah Khan saw the emergence of new Europe after the great revolutions of 1848 in many countries of Europe. The Age of Methernich collapsed, the autocratic rules vanished and a wave of liberation, constitutionalism and nationalism swept the whole of Europe. A strong patriotic current went through every nation in Europe, and a new era dawned there with rays of hopes for everyone. These changes greatly influenced Azimullah and he wished India also to be free and united. Azimullah then visited Egypt¹⁹ and then he delivered the message of his master, Nana Saheb, which he himself wrote in a letter to the Caliph at Constantinople.²⁰ He visited the court of the Sultan and saw the Ohoman Emperor personally and exchanged his views with him. When at Malta, Azimullah heard of the great fighting between the Russians and the British in the Crimean War (1854-56) and the Russian defeat at hands of the combined Anglo-French army, he decided to witness the scene in person. While on his way to Crimea a part of Russian territory, he met the famous British journalist William Howard Russell at Constantinople,²¹ who described his impressions

17. Haze, Charles Downer—Europe since 1815—page 240-260.

18. Ibid page 215-239.

19. Hardikar, Srinewas Balaji—*Op. Cit.*, page 55.

20. Sen Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 127.

21. William Howard Russell was British journalist of "London Times" in India during the mutiny. When he met Azimullah at Constantinople, he gave his own impressions about him in his book, "My diary in India in the year 1858-59, volume I, page 165-67. He wrote that

"I went down for a few days to Constantinople and while stopping at Missirie's Hotel saw on several occasions, a handsome slim young-man, of dark olive complexion, dressed in an Oriental costume which

about him. Azimullah visited the actual scene of the battle front, and had actually seen the Russian batteries at work from a safe distance. He saw that the invincibility of the British army could be broken and victory could be achieved. With these feelings in mind, he dreamt one day to wreak vengeance on the British to redress the wrong. After remaining there for some time, Azimullah returned to India and presented all his account and experiences of England and Europe to his master, Nana Saheb.

The Nana very patiently heard all the account from Azimullah and then decided to strike at the roots of the British Empire in India

Nana Saheb prepares the ground in India himself

The circumstances, and the injustice of the British placed the Nana in such a position, from where he had no escape, but to struggle; he was thrown in such a corner, from where retreat meant his own down fall and forward march would mean his armed conflict with the British. If he had kept silent and submitted to injustice, aggression and oppression, he would have been called a coward and a vanquished man. He would have been thrown into oblivion. The Nana did not like to be called a coward. He preferred the other way, the path of action, duty and honour, the noble and the better path for the persons of fortitude and firm, determination. He fully determined himself to fight for his cause and not to submit to the foreigners, who had come in his country as traders and by their cunning had become the masters. He heard the call of duty and

was new to me, and covered with rings and finery. He spoke French and English, dined at the table and as far as I could make out was an Indian prince, who was on his way back from the prosecution of an unsuccessful claim against the East India Company. He went to Crimea to see those great Roostums, the Russians who have beaten French and English together. Is it not curious enough that he should have felt such an interest to see, with his own eyes, how matters were going in the Crimean war. It would not be strange in a European country to evince such curiosity, but in an Asiatic, of the non-military caste, it certainly is. He saw the British army in a state of some depression, and he formed as I have since heard a very unfavourable opinion of its morale and physique in comparision with that of the French.

religion to be up and doing, even if death stands on his way. Let death come upon him, he would never desist from the path of his duty, action and honour.²²

The Nana very well knew that no one knows what one could do till one had tried and few tried their best till they had been forced to do that. Calamity was the touchstone of brave minds and it was the ladder, that would lead to heaven. He also fully realised that if there were real worth in his character like sweet herbs, it would give forth the finest fragrance, when pressed by the circumstances and adverse situations. The Nana realised that the hour of his test had come and he would welcome the situation and face that like a brave hero and would either achieve the victory or would breathe his last in the path of his duty and action like a true soldier of his pious motherland.

He had to decide between pleasure and pain, comforts and sorrows, between action and leisure, between fame and defamation, the worldly attachments or heavenly virtues; and the pages of the past history of his nation rolled through his eyes. The foreign powers invaded India and the Indian resistance collapsed only because it lacked cohesion, purpose and action. The leadership lacked the requisite fortitude, courage and strength and the masses failed to co-ordinate their means and methods to repulse the aggressors. The Nana was confident of the inherent power of the nation and the sense of sacrifice of the people. He was also confident that he was on the right and justified and thus he took up the firm decision to resist the wrong, to uphold the right to drive away the enemy and to fight to the finish.

It was a momentous decision, an uphill task and required all energy, resources pluck and resolution. The decision once taken,

22. श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मो निघर्नं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

गीता- अध्याय 3 श्लोक 35 पृष्ठ 78

अर्थ- इसलिए सावधान होकर स्वधर्म का आचरण करें, क्योंकि अच्छी प्रकार आचरण किये हुए दूसरे के धर्म से गुणरहित भी अपना धर्म अति उत्तम है, अपने धर्म में मरना भी कल्याणकारक है और दूसरे का धर्म भय को देने वाला है ।

had to be materialised. The Nana started organising all the forces to rally round his cause with full precautions. There was no dearth of men of great intellect, of firm determination and of courageous deeds in the palace of Bithoor of the Nana,²³ who combined under the inspiring leadership of the Nana for organising a nation-wide revolt against the British regime. Bala Bhatt, Bala Saheb, Rao Saheb, Tatya Tope, Azimullah Khan, Jwala Prasad and many other brave and intelligent persons were the allies of the Nana to extend their helping hand in the great and momentuous task.

The Nana organised the People's war

Though the British government did not recognise the Nana as Peshwa, all the Maratha chiefs had by then realised their mistakes committed by them in the past and they now regarded the Nana as the legitimate heir of Baji Rao II. Hence they now recognised him as the Peshwa, the uncrowned head of the down-trodden Maratha people, nay of the Indian people. And the Nana on his own part still considered himself as the head of the Maratha confederacy. In this connection the Nana wrote several letters to the various Maratha chiefs and took them all into his confidence.²⁴

The Nana entered into correspondence with many Indian states. He wrote letters to the heads of the states Gwalior, Indore, Nagpur, Jammu, Bhunj, Chanda, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kholahander, Jhalawar, Rewa, Baroda, Hyderabad, Shorapur, Kholapur, Satara, Mysore, Delhi and Oudh to name a few cases.

He also sent letters to Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Russia, France and Italy through his messengers. The Jammu ruler Gulab Singh replied in affirmative and promised help. The Nana through Gulab Singh sent his message to Russia and got a reply also.²⁵

23 Kaye and Mallsen—'History of India Mutiny' (5 Volumes, London 1897-1911) volume—II. page 236.

24. Hardikar, Srinawas Balaji—*Op. Cit.*—page 68-69.

25. Foreign Secret consultations, Nos. 344-46 dated 25th June, 1858, National Archives, New Delhi. A sadhu named Sita Ram Baba, who had been interrogated for a week from January 18 to 25, in 1858 by the Judicial commissioner of Mysore revealed these facts and brought to the notice of the government. "Deposition of Sita Ram Baba."

The Nana was a very shrewd politician and well understood the policy of the British. So, he, in order to gain the confidence, good-will and consent of the shadow Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, wrote a letter to him through Man Singh the then leader of the eastern part of Oudh. The main purpose of the Nana was to declare Bahadur Shah II as the head of the revolution, and to organise and collect the army in his name. The unity between the Nana and Bahadur Shah II symbolised the unity of all the Hindus and Muslims in India. It also cemented the bond of strength between the two major communities of India, and made them united together under one flag, one banner and one slogan and one cause, for the sake of the nation and for the sake of all.²⁶

The Nana sent letters²⁷ to all important personalities through his messengers, Faquirs, Sadhus and Behas who acted as his agents. Those letters were in a cryptic language, and with special signs written on them and in a language, that any ordinary person could neither read nor understand them. The whole plan was executed in a masterly fashion,²⁸ that no one could make out any thing. These letters found their access in cantonment areas as well so that India soldiers also came in contact with these Sadhus, Behas and Faquirs. These letter were also replied in affirmative.

The Nana sent his envoys to many courts of Indian states. These envoys used to go on Elephant back with all pomp and show and also exhibiting the grandeur of Nana Saheb to all. They were accompanied by armed men. They used to talk of armed rebellion against the British and also used to ask all to be ready for the appointed hour to take active part in the sacred cause of driving the British out of the land.

On April 18, 1857, Henery Lawrance who at that time was the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, came to know about the intention and purpose of these letters, wrote to the Governor-General a long letter in which he expressed his suspicion, that the army, police and

26. Rizvi, Dr. Sayad Athar Abbas "Swantra Delhi—1857 (Published by U.P. Government—1957) page 29.

27. Kaye, Sir John William, A History of the Sepoy war in India, (London—1878) volume 1st, page 576-77.

28. *Ibid* „ page 578-79.

the inhabitants of the towns and cities were organising in a conspiracy to revolt at any time.²⁹

Thus, after making all the preliminary grounds³⁰ for the revolt, the Nana set out personally from Bithoor to tour different parts of the country to establish his personal contact and also to satisfy himself that all was ready and that everything was going on according to his plans.

The Nana's Journey. During the course of his busy engagements Nana Saheb once came in contact with a Sadhu, known as Dassa Baba. He was known to have some magical powers. He gave a small idol of lotus seeds to the Nana and asked him to send that to all parts of the country. He said that wherever those lotus seeds would go they would show their effects on the minds of the people and they would be prepared to join in hands and gloves with him in his great task of liberating the motherland from the clutches of the English. Nana Saheb then divided that lotus into many small fragments. These fragments were then placed in chapaties and then those were sent to be distributed far and wide in the country. In this way the lotus and the chapaties were sent by the Nana as symbol of revolution and also as signal for preparation with the message to be ready to do or die.

The lotus. The lotus³¹ was also used as a symbol of the message of liberty and brotherhood in the army. A person³² used to appear in one cantonment with the lotus in his hand, and then after giving that to all, the last man used to go to another cantonment. In this way the lotus, the symbol of liberty and unity, passed from one cantonment to another and conveyed the message of the Nana to all.

The Chapati. So also the Chapaties³³ were used. Each Chapati symbolised the question of bread and butter of every Indian the

29. Kave, Sir John William—*op. cit.*, Vol. 1st, page 576.

30. *Ibid* „ page 577.

31. Hutchinson, Captain G.—Narrative of the Mutinies in Oudh—Calcutta—1859) page—4.

32. Kave, Sir John William—*op. cit.*, page 572-73.

33. Cary, W.H.—The Mohammadan Rebellion—Its premonitory symptoms, (Roorkee 1857) page 9, 10.

question of their existence or doom. The Chapati sent the message of revolt and liberty from village to village, throughout India.³⁴ It made every Indian, irrespective of his caste or creed, to think for his livelihood, which was taken away by the British. It also made them realise that every Indian had to fight for his right of (bread) existence, against a foreign enemy, whose rule was based on the principles of exploitation and force. So, force had to be met with force and the nation's exploitations had to be resisted at any cost.

The distribution of lotus and chapatis amongst the Indian masses and its wide circulation throughout the country was acknowledged and stated by many persons who gave evidence before the judges during the trial proceedings of Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah in Delhi,³⁵ which confirmed the fact that the revolt was well planned and all preliminary preparations had been made. And the mastermind behind this scheme was Nana Saheb Dhondu Pant.

When all the explosive preparations had been made the Nana had to ignite the silent atmosphere into a thundering bolt. In April 1857, the Nana on the pretext of pilgrimage and sight-seeing, started from Bithoor. It is an important factor that the Nana alone undertook the country wide tour and sought the help and co-operation of the masses, Hindus and Muslims both for his sacred cause of ousting the British from India. Neither Bahadur Shah nor

34. Kaye and Malleison—*op. cit.*, Vol. VI, page 86.

35. (a) Muienuddin also wrote in his book, *Khandaja Gadar* that during January, February, 1857 the Chapatis were distributed amongst the village as a token of National revolt. Page 38-41.

(b) Jatmal, a witness detective in the trial proceedings of Bahadur Shah stated and accepted the fact of lotus and chapatis being distributed amongst the village-folk. *Trial of the King of Delhi*—p. 74.

(c) Chunni a witness and a detective of the government, deposed in his statements that Chapatis were distributed in the villages and there was a Nation-wide danger for a revolt in the country. *'Trial of the King of Delhi'*—page—81 and 85.

(d) Sheer, J.W., *'Daily life during the Indian Mutiny'*—and personal experiences of 1857—page 7-8 (London—1898).
J.W. Sheer was the Collector and the Magistrate of Fatehpur during the mutiny period—He wrote his personal experience of 1857, in which he stated the fact of Chapatis, distributed in the village.

any other mutiny leader contacted the masses so much as Nana Saheb. Therefore, he was the true and genuine leader of the revolt, and he was the main driving force behind the movement. Had Bahadur Shah II been the sole motivator of the uprising, with his arrest and surrender on 21st September, 1857, the movement would have collapsed. But this did not happen.

The first place visited by the Nana was Delhi,³⁶ where he met the Mughal Emperor and his Queen Begum Zeenat Mahal. The Nana discussed secret plans with them and placing the full responsibilities of Delhi on him, he proceeded to Ambala³⁷ and there also sowed the seeds of revolt, and after placing the responsibilities on local persons he returned.

Then on 18th April, 1857, the Nana set out for Lucknow. He had already informed the government about his visits. The British (though they had all the suspicion about him) did not like an open enmity with him and so the government wrote to its officials to treat the Nana in a manner befitting his dignity and honour and certainly also to keep a watch on his movements.³⁸ The Nana was accompanied by his brother Gangadhar Rao, Tatya Tope, nephew Rao Saheb, and many other near and dear ones. His Diwan, Azimullah Khan was also with him in this tour to Lucknow.³⁹ This tour of the Nana was a prelude to the wide spread revolt. He contacted, under the pretext of sight-seeing the discontented noblemen, Nawabs and other persons, who were also against the British policy in India and were eager to do something. The Nana called on Sir Henry Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, as a mark of courtesy, but in fact not to give him any chance of doubt about himself. But when the Nana left Lucknow and suddenly departed for Kanpur, without paying any return visit to Sir Henry Lawrence, it created suspicion and then Martin Richard Gubbins wrote a letter to Sir Hugh Wheeler, who was then the Officer-in-Command of the Garrison at Kanpur. In return he wrote that the Nana could not be easily disbelieved.

36. Misra, A.S.,—*op. cit.*—page 196.

37. Rizir, Dr. Sayyad Athar Abbas—*op. cit.*—page 19.

38. Russel, W.H.,—My diary in India—Part I—page 168.

39. Gubbins, Martin Richard—An Account of the Mutinies in Oudh and the seige of Lucknow. (London 1859), page 30, 31.

On 22 May, 1857, the Nana apparently as a mark of good gesture, sent his two guns, and three hundred infantry and cavalry men, as present to Sir Hugh Wheeler, which he gladly received.⁴⁰ In fact the Nana sent his men to foment trouble there in British camp and to persuade all the soldiers to help him at the time of revolt. This was a stroke of master diplomacy of the Nana.

Azimullah Khan in his Diary wrote that Nana Saheb's tours besides Luknow and Delhi, covered Benaras, Allahabad, Baxar, Meerut, Gaya, Janakpur, Parasnath, Jagannathpuri, Panchvati, Rameshwaram, Dwarka, Nasik, Abu, Ujjain, Mathura, Badrinath and Kamrup.⁴¹ It was in a way an extensive tour visiting east, west, north and south of the country, to watch the things in person and also to make arrangements for the final assault on the British on the appointed day.

Azimullah Khan's Diary further gives the information that the Nana was accorded great welcome wherever he went on account of his high position, and sweet personality. He also visited all the cantonments, that he came across on the way⁴². He freely mixed with the soldiers and British officials.

In the Diary of Azimullah Khan, it is stated that during his tour Nana Saheb secretly informed the people that the revolt would start on May 31, 1857 throughout the country.

During these tours the Nana used to go on elephant, with his numerous retinue, comprised of camels, horses, infantry men and his personal bodyguard and cavalry men, with all pomp and show and full of confidence and dignity, as if he had been the master of the situation. His Kingly retinue greatly influenced the masses and reminded them the last days of Peshwas. It evoked both pity and respect for him and paved the way for his come back. The masses realised how the British had reduced the princely class of India into nothingness and how the British had become the masters in their place. It greatly helped to spread a feeling of hatred and indignation against the British and to foment the feelings of revolt in the masses.

40. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 196.

41. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 196.

42. Hardikar, Balaji Srinewas—*Op. Cit.*, page 72.

During his tours Nana Saheb came in contact with Maharani Baiza Bai of Gwalior, the widowed queen of Daulat Rao Sciendhia, who had died in 1827. Baiza Bai had her great influence and she was deadly against the British policy and their rule. She planned a great yagna (यज्ञ) at Mathura in 1857. Many renowned sages and Sadhus participated in it. This occasion was taken as an opportunity of meeting all the patriots at one place. During the performance of Yagna, Baiza Bai for some reasons or the other withdrew from it and Nana Saheb at once stepped into her shoes. Dassa Baba a great anchorite was with the Nana at that time. Swami Birjanand the celebrated Guru of Swami Dayanand, also took part in those deliberations and a secret meeting was held at the hermitage of Swami Birjanand⁴³ in which Nana Saheb, Tatyā Tope, a son of Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah and a representative of the queen of Oudh participated and they all planned the future course of action under the leadership of Nana Saheb. This also proved the fact that the Nana was the real interpreter and organisor of 1857 revolt. He planned the whole revolution.

In this plan it was contemplated that a simultaneous night attack was to be launched on all military stations in India and the extermination of all English males, excluding their women and children, was to be done. The Ruler of Rewa was to attack Benares and take hold of that place, and then to attack Bengal. Bahadur Shah II was to take charge of Delhi and its neighbouring places ; Rango Bapu Gupta was to organise the revolt in the south, where the Maharaja of Mysore and Hyderabad were to help him in his efforts. In this way country-wide scheme was planned for revolt, and the Nana was the master mind behind all this affair.

The Nana had personally visited Meerut,⁴⁴ the place from where the mutiny started and himself prepared all the soldiers to revolt there when the Nana returned to Bithoor from these tours.

43. "Sarvadeshik Saptahik" a weekly paper published by 'Arya Pratinidhi Sabha' in its issue of 11th April, 1971, published that Swami Birja Nand ji the celebrated Guru of Swami Daya Nand ji took part in the deliberations.

44. "Cawnpore collectorate Records", File No. 738, Secretariate Records-Office, Lucknow.

his heart was filled with satisfaction; and the feeling of fervour and patriotism ran in his mind and body and he prepared himself to shoulder the great responsibility that was soon to befall on him.⁴⁵

Peshwa as the torch-bearer of the society and nation.

The Nana owed his title and rights to the deceased Peshwa, who reposed his full confidence in him and considered him worthy to uphold that dignity earnestly, and the Nana did his best to prove worthy of him and continued his strife with the British and did not submit to their arrogance or verdict. But this was his personal case, his personal fight with the British. But he had his obligations towards his nation, culture and religion. The British had refused to recognise him as Peshwa and the Nana on his part did not agree with their decision and considered himself to be the heir and successor to Baji Rao II and hence the Peshwa of his people and Nation.

The verdict of the British was one sided. Neither it was accepted by the Nana nor endorsed by the Indian people. The arbitrary decision was not binding on him nor on the Indian masses, and it proved true when the Nana gave the call of revolt and the people responded to it. He was still their Peshwa, their leader and benefactor.

The Nana as the Peshwa had to take up the cause of the Indian society, nation, social, religion and culture as part of his duty. The Nana fully realised that in fact there was no one left on the political scene of India to either oppose the British or to take up the cause of the Indian masses, who were suffering under the heavy yoke of the British regime. All the Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, Kings or Zamidars, submitted to the British and there was no one to oppose them. The Indian masses had practically become orphans. No Raja or Maharaja or Nawab came forward to protect them against the British. Then should the Indians be left at their mercy? Should the Indians be allowed to become prey to their

45. Rizvi Dr. Sayyad Agha Abbas—*Op. Cit.*, page 19, 20.

46. "What right have you to occupy India, and declare me an outlaw, who gave you the right to rule over India? What, you Firangies are the Kings and we thieves in this our own country" The Nana's letter to Sir Hope Grant which he wrote in 1859. In this letter the Nana speaks on behalf of his nation

foreign foe ? Should the state of helplessness and despondency be allowed to prevail in India ? Should the foreign rule of the British be allowed to march ahead on the corpses of the Indian people ? Was the land of Ram, Krishna, Pratap or Shivaji devoid of bravery, patriotism, selfless devotion and sense of sacrifice ? Were the affairs of India to be allowed to remain or to become worse day by day ? The Nana analysed within himself and thought that he would act as Peshwa where expected to act. It appears that since then the Nana infused in his acts, the sense of duty of Rana, the warfare tactics and the power of organisation of Krishna, the sense of sacrifice and patriotism of Pratap and the bravery and unyielding will of Shivaji. He decided to oppose the British tooth and nail.

Thus the Nana was determined to uphold the social, political, cultural and religious obligations reposed on him as Peshwa to the last breath of his life.

The Nana as the de-facto leader. The Nana, if he desired could lead a very comfortable and luxurious life in Bithoor. He had abundance of wealth at his disposal, that was left for him by the deceased Peshwa. He had a palacial building to live and had all the attendants to obey his wishes and to carry out his orders. But was it proper to live a luxurious life and to die unhonoured, unsung and unknown ? He got all his wealth as a son and successor of a deceased Peshwa, so the wealth and the property he got did not come to him as his earned property but as the legal heir of Baji Rao II. So, he had to justify his right by paying back to his society and people, the debt he owed to them. The Peshwa was the first servant of the people during the days of Shivaji. The Nana also tried to become the first servant of his people.

The legal power or the sovereignty of the country passed to the British by virtue of their superior might and power and the Nana determined to become the true representative of his people, the de-facto leader of his nation in the hour of its need. He would oust the British by dint of force, the force and general-will of his people and the brute force of arms. The Nana knew that the only ground on which the British rule rested in India, was their army, so the Nana decided to axe the British army and to unite his brother-Indians in the British army to separate themselves from

their white masters and then to wage the war of Indian Independence. If the army of the British was destroyed, the British rule could be destroyed. So, the Nana contemplated the plea of the sepoy-revolt in India and worked for that. This was the main theory, on which he worked.

The Nana as the spokesman of the rights and grievances of his people. During his countrywide tour the Nana with his own eyes saw the very deplorable and poor conditions of the people. They were living with scanty food and clothings, whereas the British officials, citizens and persons were leading a luxurious and princely life. The royal families were tumbled down, the rich and the well-to-do gentry of the society was robbed and the peasantry and the common man was reduced to utter poverty. The land, the industry, the services and even the sovereignty of the country were snatched away by the British and India was made a poor country and was reduced to such a state that it could never stand upon its own legs and would always remain a parasite. India's honour, wealth, industry, trade and commerce, agriculture and cottage-industry were all trodden and damaged and India was permanently crippled. The Nana could not tolerate that miserable condition of his country, and he took up the cause of his brethren citizens, and was fully determined to be the spokesman of the rights and grievances of his people. He would become a helping hand to emancipate them from the bondage of slavery and to make them a free and independent nation. He took up the vow and earnestly devoted his heart and soul in his mission. He expressed his feelings in his proclamation.⁴⁷

47. Foreign political consultations, 22nd October, 1858. No. 18, National Archives, New Delhi.

From Dhondo Pant Nana Peshwa Pant Pradhan to all the Surinjama-dars, Jageradars, Deshmook, Despandeys and other Jamidars, Patels, Coolkernes, Kukkernia Naik wals, Shetsumlees, and the whole of the population of the Deccan and the Carnatic, it is ordered to be proclaimed that :—

"Tyranny, wickedness and injustice having been much practised by the "Kaffur" English on the faithful and on the God-fearing. I have been commissioned by God to punish the Kaffur by annihilating them and to re-establish the Hindu and Muhammodans Kingdoms as formally and to protect our country..." Nana speaks as Peshwa, as sole-protector of the country and on behalf of all the Hindus and Muslims of the country.

The Political Exploitation. The political situation in the country at that time was surcharged with terror, exploitation and aggrandizement of the British at the expense of the poor helpless and weak Indian rulers. Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General of India was following the policy of encroachment and for this he propounded the "Doctrine of Lapse" and within its fold engulfed many Indian states. The principality of Satara was the first to fall a prey to the Doctrine of Lapse. Then came the turn of Jhansi, and it was also incorporated in the British dominions. Nagpur was the next to fall prey to Dalhousie's policy, Carnatic state was also annexed and the British rule was extended there also. The other states annexed under this policy were, Jaipur and Shambhalpur, Bagat and Udaipur.

The Doctrine of Lapse did not recognise the right of adoption and the right of inheritance by the adopted son. This was contrary to the Hindu Law, but Lord Dalhousie did not hesitate to over ride the law of the land and of the religion and introduced his own Doctrine as it suited British interests then.

Besides this Doctrine of Lapse, Lord Dalhousie sought other pretexts and reasons for the annexation of the territories of several rulers. Punjab, Lower Burma and some outlying tracts of Sikkim were annexed by conquest; the Kingdom of Oudh was annexed on the ground of misrule and tyranny. The province of Berar was taken away from the Nizam of Hyderabad; as a compensation to his non-payment of his dues towards the company, for ever.

In this way Lord Delhousie vastly increased the British territory and the area of domain by his policy of conquest and

48. He says about the country and gives a call to all the inhabitants of the nation to join his hands against the "Kaffurs" the English in driving them out...

"Proclamation" issued by the Nana on September, 1858.

"Shall it be unnatural of me to expect that the descendents of the Peshwas who had all along been friendly towards your people.... The British people have broken treaties, trampled down their promises, snatched away the crowns of the Indian Rajas....It is for this reason that this war is waged...." Letter of the Nana to king of Nepal.

Foreign Political consultation, 30th December, 1859, No. 542, National Archives, New Delhi.

other means of annexation.⁴⁹ It had its great reaction on Indian society and amongst the political oligarchy, hierarchy, Rajas, Maharajas, big Zamindars and Nawabs.

Its reactions and repercussions on both the sides. Whereas the British expansionists and annexation policy, placed the British as the supreme power in India, and subordinated all the front rank Indian powers to secondary state, it also left a mark of deep reactions and repercussions on both the sides. The British considered themselves to be second to none. The power intoxicated their mind and they did not pay any heed to the general sentiment of the common masses. The 'General will' that had taken its place and importance in England, was reduced to nothingness in India. The Rajas, the Maharajas, the big Zamindars and Nawabs were treated as common ones and reduced to the status of common men without any regard or respect to their sentiments, heridity, traditions, customs, prestige and power, and whereas it made the British more arrogant and haughty in their temperament behaviour and dealings with the Indians, it (at the same time) greatly hurt the inner feelings of the Indians and aroused their sense of self dignity and pride. Lord Dalhousie's rule in the eyes of the British was the best and most successful. It paved the way for further expansion and consolidation. It introduced railways and telegraphs in India and opened an era of industrialisation in the country. The western way of living, thinking and administration were introduced in India in the name of modern thinking. The Britishers ridiculed the old Indian institutions such as satipratha and gave their one sided verdict that they all were worn out and out dated.⁵⁰ The Britishers boasted and claimed themselves to be better educated, more cultured and of higher civilization. They looked down upon the Indians as uncultured, half civilized, black in colour and barbarious in manners and behaviour.

After gaining the physical control and establishing their political power and empire in India, the British tried to convert India into a Christendom, assuming control in social, religious and cultural fields as well. The British even went on declaring that

49. Benerjee—The Indian constitutional Documents, Vol. I, pp. 342-43.

50. Foreign secret consultations. Nos. 22-23, dated 30th April, 1858.

their rule was inevitable for India to free it from their semistate of civilization and to give India a better form of administration, social set up and western scientific thinking. For this aim the British started washing out the age old social and religious customs and traditions and in their place they started introducing their own methods in the name of reformation and re-adjustibility. Thus, the British followed their political success with the policy of hitting out at the social, religious, educational, cultural, economic and ethical order of the Indian society.

But this was not easily accepted by the Indians. It evoked great amount of indignation and anger among both the Hindus and the Muslims. The superior wisdom of culture and religion of the Indians prevailed over their political weakness, and a slow and gradual opposition began to form inside the society against the Britisher, who tried to subvert every one's religion.⁵¹ The Indians could not tolerate the evil designs on their social, cultural and religious order of living and thinking. Also the idea of Christianity spreading and expanding in India at the cost of its poverty and political weakness greatly generated out all resentment throughout India and the Indian people who did not organise themselves under one banner and flag in the name of their political independence, at once started organising themselves under one banner and hence for protecting their religion, culture and civilization from being destroyed by the British. They greatly helped Nana Saheb to mobilise public opinion against the British and to organise a nation wide opposition to the British. Such were the deep repercussions on the Indian society.

The annexation of the Indian States on pretext like Jhansi⁵² and others, had serious repercussions. The disbanded soldiers of the former Indian States armies, became unemployed and the question of bread and butter forced them to organise themselves to oppose the British rule in India, which they thought, was mainly responsible for their miseries and calamities. The proclamation⁵³ of the Begum of Oudh greatly reflected such feelings.

51. Foreign secret consultations. No. 14, dated 30th April, 1958.

52. Foreign Political consultation. No. 94-96, dated 18 August, 1854, National Archives, New Delhi.

53. Foreign Political Consultation. No. 3022, Dt. 31 Dec., 1858.

The big taluqdars and zamindars were greatly agitated by the annexation policy of the British which deprived them of all their privileged position and reduced them to the level of common man. This greatly changed the social and agrarian order of Indian society and left deep repercussions on all of them.

Thus, the British policies produced great reactions and repercussions on both sides in India, which ultimately became the causes of the first war of Indian Independence.

It was a national uprising. The national uprising was widespread in its nature, extent and influence. It had its momentous vigour and force in Indo-Gangetic plain and it convulsed distant places like Mysore in the south and Jalpaiguri in the east. Thus the rising exhibited the character of a national uprising full of patriotic emotions and actions. Mr. V. D. Savarkar was the first to mention this fact to the world at large.

In 1857 many foreign countries characterised the rising as a national struggle. The Constantinople Newspaper founded in 1848 by Ivon Bogorov reported the events of 1857 rising and called it a national war of India. In 1858 the Bulgarian Pamphlets, edited by Dimitar Mroutev, discussed the revolt of India as a national war. In the Bulgarian Daily issue No. 14 of the 17th July, 1857, G. S. Rakovsky, the father of the Bulgarian national movement wrote, "Finally, India should be Indian and not British. Sooner or later this will happen." The freedom-loving French people denounced British imperialism in India and recognised in the 1857 rising the national struggle of the people. Italy too who had friendly relations with the British, however upheld the cause of the Indians in their struggle and called that as a nationalist struggle against the foreign domination.

Karl Marx's comments on the nature of the rising deserve full mention. He wrote in 1857, "Even John Bull himself will realise that, what he considers military mutiny is in truth a national revolt."⁵⁴ On August 1, 1857, Earnest Jones wrote that the revolt was not a military mutiny but a National insurrection, and that this insurrection

54. New York Daily Tribune, August 14, 1857 (unsigned article, 'The Indian Question' by Karl Marx).

was "the precursor of our loss of India."⁵⁵ Charles Pourmian writing in *L'Estafette* on the 3rd October, 1857 observed, 'It is confirmed that the religious question was no more than a pretext. The real cause is general resurgence of Natioanlism (in 1857 rising). Our sympathies are with the Indians, because love of the motherland of national independence are things sacred for us'.⁵⁶

Even Lord Canning in the words of Kaye, "Soon ceased to speak of the mutiny and called it a 'rebellion'-a 'revolt'".⁵⁷ The view of Lord Canning who was the Governor-General of India at that time is a great evidence to support the fact that the rising was a national one and not a sepoy mutiny. There is also evidence on record that besides the Nana, the other leaders of the rising endeavoured to maintain the national unity in those days. The proclamation of Birjees Kadur, Walee of Oudh insisted 'Men and women' should think it their duty to extirpate the English."⁵⁸ The common bond of national unity and independence bound the Hindus and Muslims so closely that 'the government of N. W. Provinces in vain authorised the expenditure of Rs. 50,000 to raise the Hindus against the Muslims in Bareilly. It was quite unsuccessful⁵⁹'. Even Aitchison, admitted with profound regret that "In this instance we could not play off the Mohammedans against the Hindus." Sir R. Temple, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner Punjab referred to Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly's remarkable Proclamation,⁶⁰ in which the Khan called upon the Hindus and Muslims to unite against the British, and described the British as the common enemy of

55. People's paper, July 4, 1857 and August 1, 1857.

56. *L'Estafette*, October 3, 1857 and September 11, 1857.

57. Kaye, Sir J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 551, 564, 565, 573, 617.

58. Foreign Political Consultations, 31st Dec., 1858, No. 1750, Enclosure of a letter from J.C. Wilson, Commissioner on special Duty, 27th May, 1858, No. 184 National Archives, New Delhi.

59. Foreign Secret consultations, No. 25 date 27th August 1858. National Archives, New Delhi, Being letter of George Couper, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh to G.F. Edmonstone.

60. (a) Foreign Secret consultations. Nos. 21-23, 30th April, 1858.

(b) Foreign Secret consultations, National Archives No. 69, New Delhi, Dated 25 June, 1858. A printed proclamation was found in the papers of Khan Bahadur Khan, No. 69.

Both". Leeaqt Ali of Allahabad in his Proclamation⁶¹ of 'Jihad' asked all the Muslims to unite against "the accursed Christians".

Thus we see that many of the contemporary Europeans and English writers characterised the rising as a national war of Indian independence.

However Dr. R.C. Majumdar is of the view that it was not a national war, and that neither Bahadur Shah nor Nana Saheb had the character of a national leader.⁶² Dr. Majumdar further wrote that 'The miseries and bloodshed of 1857-58 were not the birth pangs of freedom movement in India, but the dying groans of an obsolete aristocracy and centrifugal feudalism of the medieval age.'⁶³ Dr. Sen in a more or less form, accepts it as the great upheaval but does not specifically mention it as a national uprising and says that the revolt had been long brewing, the greased cartridge only hastened it.⁶⁴ Sri K.M. Munshi is also of the view that the events of 1857 were not part of a Sepoy's Mutiny, but they represent the first stage of our struggle for freedom. He concludes that the events of 1857 can most appropriately be described as the Great National Revolt.⁶⁵ Sri K.M. Panikar also advocates the view that "Though the spark was lit by the Sepoys, the conflagration was spread by the activities of people outside the army, which gave the movement its national character." Thus we see that the rising touched all the corners and parts of the country and was the most vigorous one and it was not altogether absent from any other part of the nation. All people of all faith participated in it and so its national character is vindicated. Also its aim and objective was national and for the benefit of all. So it was a truly national uprising.

61. Foreign Political consultations. Nos. 749-53. National Archives. New Delhi.

62. Majumdar, Dr. R.C. "The sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857" pp. 218, 219.

63. *Ibid.* page—241.

64. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 40.

65. Munshi Sri K.M. "The Great Revolt of 1857" being Kulapati's letter No. 127 to Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan—Bombay.

This feeling was also reflected in one of the proclamations issued by the Azamgarh nationalists, calling upon Indians of all classes to rise against the faithless British whose sole object was to ruin them all.⁶⁶

It was a planned movement. Opinions sharply and diametrically differ on the question whether the uprising was a planned one or was a sudden outburst of national opposition to the British. Dr. Sen is of the thinking that there was no pre-plan of the rising.⁶⁷ He followed the line of thinking of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who stated that, "there was no evidence that the uprising had been pre-planned, or that the army and the Indian people had entered into a conspiracy to overthrow the rule of the Company..." The trial of Bahadur Shah made it clear that the uprising was as much a surprise to Bahadur Shah as to the British."⁶⁸ Dr. Sen is also of the view that there was not any mastermind behind it. Nor was there any careful planning behind it. But the official history of freedom struggle by the Uttar Pradesh Government has criticised Dr. Sen for his holding such view and summarily dismissing this important fact.⁶⁹ This also reflects the fact that, otherwise, the U. P. Government believed on the strength of the records available that the uprising was a planned one and there was a mastermind behind the whole scene who directed and conducted the operations against the British. The British writers have given glimpses of disceptions, which reflect the idea that the rising was a planned one. Metcalfe wrote that the 'Chapati' signified extermination⁷⁰ of the British in India. Mr. W. Thornhill the contemporary Magistrate of Mthura saw in the seriousness of the people, a signal of some coming evil for there had been similar circulation of "Chapaties" in 1803 before the commencement of Maratha depredations in Northern India, and subsequently during the Vellore Mutiny of 1806.⁷¹

66. Foreign Political consultations. No. 197 dated, 8th October, 1858.

67. Sen, Dr. S.N.—'Eighteen Fifty Seven Introduction', page—X.

68. *Ibid*...Introduction and Forward by Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, the then Education Minister, Govt. of India, page—viii.

69. Freedom struggle in U.P.—Vol. I, pp. 402-404.

70. Metcalfe, Sir T., 'Two narratives of the Mutiny at Delhi' (Westminister—1898) pp. 39-40.

71. Thornhill, W., Personal Adventures and Experiences of a Magistrate During the Rise, progress and suppression of the Indian Mutiny (London—1884) pp. 2-3.

In the trial of Bahadur Shah, Hakim Absamullah stated that no one had any knowledge of its significance.⁷² It is, therefore, clear that the Nana, considering himself as the Chief of the deposed Maratha confederacy did his best to organise his people just as was done in 1803. Here the precedent establishes the subsequent event. It can be safely assumed that the chapaties served identically the same impression as in 1803 and in Vellore mutiny.

Sita Ram Baba, when cross-examined by the Judicial Commissioner of Mysore, Mr. H.B. Devereux and Captain J. L. Paarse, from the 18th to the 25th of January, 1858 at Mysore said that the Baiza Bai of Gwalior hatched the device twenty years back and the Nana at that time executed that into the plan and action.

Mr. Forgett, however, rejected the story as incredible.⁷³ But the attempts on the part of the British to arrest and punish the Nana at any cost put this fact beyond doubt, that even the British considered the Nana, as the master mind behind the uprising. Lord Roberts also believed that the chapaties were meant for "preparing the Natives for some forthcoming event."⁷⁴ G. Trevelyan also writes that 'the mysterious symbol flew and spread through the length and breadth of the land, confusion and questioning a wild terror and a wild hope.'⁷⁵ Trevelyan further writes that a similar symbol of Red Lotus was also used to unite all the sepoys and that the ring-leaders of that gigantic conspiracy meant to convey that 'something was coming the like of which had not been known before.'

Wilson observed that every regiment had a committee of three members who looked after to everything connected with this Mutiny.⁷⁶ All these things contribute a solid ground to believe that there was a meaningful phenomena present in the country, that worked for a concerted and planned action, and constituted a conspiracy to drive the English out of the country, and such a great conspiracy cannot be without a leader of national eminence and

72. Proceedings of Bahadur Shah's trial (Calcutta—1895) p. 165.

73. Forgett, C., *Our real Danger in India* (London-1877)—p. 60.

74. Roberts, Field Marshal Earl—*Forty one years in India* p. 34.

75. Trevelyan, Sir G.O.—"*Cawnpore*"—(London-1899) pp. 53-55.

76. , Kaye Sir, J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 109.

status and since Bahadur Shah was the person in that plan, the only man worth of capacity and history behind him was the Nana.

Mac Munn writes that seditious papers, chapaties, and red lotus were in circulation, and they came from one village watchmen to another with the message, from the north to the south and from the east to the west,⁷⁷ and Trevelyan says that the mystery could never be solved, as on inquiry the watchmen always said, 'It is an order' and either Bahadur Shah or the Nana who were the recognised heads of the hereditary rulers of the people, could give the 'orders', and since Bahadur Shah denied the fact, and the Nana in his Proclamation asserted the same, so the mastermind behind the order was the Nana. Kaye⁷⁸ termed the chapaty as 'a signal of warning and preparation designed, and to prepare the people to be ready for the crisis.'⁷⁹ Mac Munn, thought denying any specific 'master-plotting', yet admits the fact that the Nana had made extensive tours 'may have also meant some attempt at combinations.'⁸⁰ Elsewhere he states that in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, 'emissaries from Hindustan were not absent'. T. Rice Holmes records that the Nana Saheb, was trying to stir up native chieftains against the British and that he and other disaffected princes had long been tempering with the sepoys. He also reveals that Cracroft Wilson, the Judge of Moradabad, collected evidence which 'convinced him that 31st May, (i.e. 1857) had been fixed for a simultaneous revolt.'⁸¹ On inquiry, when Kanhya Parshad Mahajan of Kanpur was asked to narrate the facts, then in his deposition he said that a plot existed in Kanpur between the Nana and the Sepoys.⁸² Kaye in his writings has acknowledged the fact that Nana

77. Mac Munn, Lt. Gen. Sir G.F.—The Indian Mutiny in Perspective (London 1931) pp. 29-30.

78. Kaye Sir J.W., *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 570-71.

79. Kaye, Sir J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 570-71.

80. Mac Munn, Lt. Gen. Sir G.F.—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 22, 29, 30, 83.

81. J.C. Wilson, Commissioner on special duty, Narrative of Events, etc., pp. 1-2.

82. Mutiny Narrative, N.W. Province, Agra Cawnpore District Deposition, No. 20, p. 47.

Saheb and his Dewan Azimullah were spreading 'their net work of intrigue all over the country.'⁸³

The official history of the freedom struggle in U.P. is severely critical of Dr. Majumdar of his interpreting the statement of Sita Ram Baba about the Nana and the rising. Instead it proves the positive evidence of the Nana's correspondence with his fellow chiefs, relating to the uprising. Dr. Majumdar's contention sounds hollow, when he says that the Peshwa Nana played a part for himself alone and he had no idea of acting in concert with others. Neither there was any question on any ground nor circumstances in which the Nana would act independently and against the interests of the nation; as Dr. Majumdar states.⁸⁴ He further says that the statement of Sitaram Bawa and Nanak Chand made many Indians to-day to believe that the Nana organised the great rebellion against the British,⁸⁵ while describing this Dr. Majumdar has failed to show as to why the statements of Sita Ram Bawa and Nanak Chand be not believed, and if at all they told a lie, then why did they tell a lie. On the contrary Kaye's contention is that the Nana was the person, who organised the rebellion. Mr. Savarkar is of the firm opinion based on facts and evidence that the Nana sent his agents to every part of India and organised the rising. Further evidence in this regard is available from the Nana's own Proclamation⁸⁶ in which he mentioned the British as enemy and gave a call to his country men to rise to the occasion.

Henry Metcalfe says that 'the Nana attended the regimental races at Lucknow (in April, 1857), the races and sports occupied three days, and during those days the Nana was at the races and sipping coffee with our officers, but at that time he was planning

83. Kye, Sir J.W.,—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, page 578.

The original document of the statement of Sita Ram Bawa included in Kaye's papers is preserved in Common Wealth Relations Office, London.

84. Majumdar, Dr. R.C.—*Op. Cit.*, p. 191.

85. *Ibid.* pp. 183, 190-191.

86. Further Papers (No. 4) relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies, 1857. Inclosure 8 in No. 3, pp. 119-120 being proclamation, issued by Nana Saheb, dated July 1, 1857.

the mutiny.⁸⁷ When the Nana toured the different parts of the country and visited Lucknow, then his movements aroused the suspicion of Sir Henry Lawrence.⁸⁸ Dr. Sen says that if it was so, then the Nana must have been a 'clever adept in dissimulation'.⁸⁹

Thus on the strength of the evidence available so far, it can safely be said that it was the Nana who organised the great national uprising of the Nation against the British, for the emancipation of the country from the yoke of the foreign rule and he was prompted from the patriotic feelings and not for his personal gain.

87. Metcalfe, Henry—Private Chronicle of Henry Metcalfe, edited by Sir Francis Tuka (London—1953) page 21.

88. Gubbins, M.R., An account of the Mutiny in Oudh and the siege of the Lucknow Residency—(London—1859) page—32.

89. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.* page 129.

CHAPTER V

Nana Saheb and the first war of Indian Independence

The Nana's efforts at home and abroad. The plans and the full outlines, as had been envisaged by the Nana with other prominent leaders were made, and a general call was circulated all over the country to oust the British from India by an armed revolution. Secret preparations were afoot in all Indian regiments¹ and information was secretly² disseminated through trusted messengers. That plan was reflected in one of the proclamations³ and is said to have been circulated by Azamgarh rebels on the directions of the Nana, calling upon Indians of all the sections to rise against the British whose sole object was to ruin them all.

The Nana's main object was to foment the revolt inside the country and to create circumstances favourable for help from outside the country. Internal disorder and external attack would help the Indians to mount their armed pressure upon the British and then to drive them away easily.

At that time, the international situation greatly favoured them. The middle of the nineteenth century was a period of mass unrest and uprisings against foreign power or dictatorial rule throughout Europe and many parts of the world. Europe was the scene of great

1. Roberts, Field Marshal, Earl—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 35, 240.

2. Kaye, Sir J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 109.

3. *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 365.

4. Foreign Political Consultations—No. 197, dated 8th October, 1858—National Archives, New Delhi.

upheavals at that time⁵. The happenings in Europe greatly influenced the feelings of the Nana and his associates. The Nana also observed that there was also a general psychological feeling amongst the masses in India, that with the completion of the centenary of the battle of Plassy on 23rd June, 1857, the British rule in India would come to an end. The Nana and his messengers fully exploited the situation.

Great Britain, at home was not sailing smoothly. There were violent labour-riots. The charter movement was also taking the form of a violent agitation in England, for the demand of liberal and general reforms. The disastrous Crimean war in 1854-56, in the eyes of many historians had been a great contributory cause of the revolt in India.⁶ The Afghan war (1839-42) was still fresh in the memories of the Indians, when the British army was routed out massacred by the Afghans and the reputation of its being invincible was broken down. It then became known to all that the British army could be defeated in battles. The Persian war in 1856 was also unwelcome to Muslims in India in particular and to all Indians in general. The Chinese war of 1856 also added troubles and difficulties to the British. All these factors encouraged the Nana to proceed in his designs and also aroused a feeling of distaste and hatred against the British rule in India.

Taking full advantages of the call of the time the Nana entered into correspondences with the French power in India and in Europe. He wrote secret letter to the French Governor at Chandranagar⁷ for help in the hour of his need..... and there was hopeful response from the French side. The Nana also planned French help directly from France. He also sent his envoys to Persia, Afghanistan and Russia. Dr. Sen however emphatically holds that the leaders of

5. The Greek war of Independence from 1821-32 against the Turks; separation of Belgium from Holland in 1839; Egypt's war against Turkey in 1832 for her rights and national risings in all European states in 1848.
6. Russel Sir W.H.,—My Diary in India in the year 1858-59 (London—1860) Vol. Ist, page 168.
7. Source Material for history of Freedom Movement in India (Bombay Govt. Records) Vol. I, pp. 253-54.

the rising were not in league with any foreign power.⁸ This view of Dr. Sen remarkably agrees with the view expressed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.⁹ But there is a testimony of Mr. R. Hilton that in 1856, during the Anglo-Persian war, the Persians incited the Indian Muslims, and that placards appeared in the predominantly Muslim towns of Delhi, Lucknow and other places, calling upon all Muhammadans to rise. The placards stated that 'the Shah of Persia was on his way with a big army to liberate Islam from infidel rule.'¹⁰

The great contemporary political observers Karl Marx and Engels were of the positive view that the Indian revolt was a part of the Chinese and Persian wars and that it was well prepared and planned.¹¹ Major General F.J. Herriot, Deputy Advocate General to the Military Commission which tried Bahadur Shah found traces of Intrigue¹² of the Mohammadan Powers of Persia and Turkey with the leaders of the rising of 1857. According to Lord Roberts, the Nana's trusted man, Azimullah carried on correspondence with Omar Pasha of Constantinople and with the French through the French settlers at Chandranagar. Kaye also corroborated the fact that the leaders of the revolt were in touch with the foreign powers, like Persia. Kaye informs that "at one time it was said that the Persians had come down to Allock and at another time that they were in full march through the Bolan Pass, and that Russia had placed its immense resources freely at the disposal of the Shah.....there were eager speculations, too, as to the course that would be adopted by the French and the Ottoman Governments."¹³ It was also the 'authentic news' that "the king of France, and the Emperor of Turkey will both side with the Persians."¹⁴ In

8. Sen, Dr. S.N.,—*Op. Cit.*, p. 405.

9. Indian Historical Records Commission, 31st Session, Mysore, 25th January, 1955.

10. Hilton, R.—'The Indian Mutiny'—(London—1957) p. 28.

11. New York Herald Tribune, July 15, 1857 (Article of Karl Marx).

12. Proceedings of the Trial of Bahadur Shah (Cal. 1895)—page 160.

13. Kaye, Sir J.W.,—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 34 Foot Note.

14. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 35-36.

their help to Indian rebels. Ashraf-ul-Akbbar, a Lucknow newspaper dated 28th March, 1857, clearly wrote that the Russian and Persian soldiers were concentrating on the Indian boarder.¹⁵ The proclamation¹⁶ of Bahadur Shah admitted that he sent royal princes to 'Iran, Turan and, Afghanistan and different parts of India.' The proclamation¹⁷ of Mirza Firoz Shah Shahzada also called upon all Hindus and Muslims to unite and enter into these 'plots' to defend religion and expel the Christians.

The Nana had proclaimed Bahadur Shah as Emperor, and himself as Peshwa, so all the proclamations of Bahadur Shah had the same sentiments and objectives as the Nana, in so far as it was patent that the aim of the both was the same. The contemporary papers wrote much about the expected Russian complicity in 1857 rising.¹⁸ According to Kaye, the Nana received a reply from Russia that assistance could be given to him, if he could take and hold Delhi.¹⁹

This statement of Kaye finds confirmation in a proclamation of Nana Saheb, published by order of the Emperor of Delhi. The Nana through Bahadur Shah II, the shadow Mughal King at Delhi, also approached the Shah of Iran, who in return promised help.²⁰ The proclamation, suggests that the French and the Russians, the then, bitter enemies of the English, would turn the British out of India. The Chinese and the Persians 'were ready to help us.'²¹

Such expedients being all fair in war, the Nana tried his best to co-ordinate his internal and external efforts, and to put his 'plans' into action in order to achieve his aim. There was already the outside political influence on the army, which indicates anti-British preparation, and the Nana fully capitalised the issue.

15. Muir, Mr. William—Intelligence Records 1857-58. Vol. I, pp. 527-30.

16. Bahadur Shah's Proclamation, 25th August, 1857, published in the Friend of India, Seranipur, October 7, 1857.

17. Foreign Secret Consultations, 30th April, 1858. Nos. 121-122, (National Archives, New Delhi).

18. The Friend of India, January 22, 1857. pp. 82-83.

19. Kaye, Sir J.W.,—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 342.

20. Rizvi, Dr. Sayyad Athar Abbas—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 32-33.

21. Foreign Political consultations, 22nd October, 1858. No. 18 (National Archives, New Delhi).

Dr. R.C. Majumdar however does not agree with this view and he emphasises that Bahadur Shah's trial demonstrates that the Rising was as much a surprise to him as to the British. He also does not agree that the Nana organised the revolt.

Dr. Majumdar, in support of his arguments, points to the accounts²² of the two contemporaries, Jiwan Lal and Moinuddin. However the deposition of Sita Ram Baba admitted that the Nana organised the revolt and wrote letters to Gulab Singh (of Kashmir) and to Russia for help and received the encouraging replies.

Dr. Majumdar also disagrees with the views of such famous authorities as 'Kaye, Duff Norton, Mallason and others,' on the question of conspiracy with Persia.²³ Dr. Majumdar tries to establish that Bahadur Shah did not know anything of the rising till the sepoys entered Delhi. But it is not true for Nana Saheb, who in his own proclamation has acknowledged his correspondence with the French for help. The Persian help became remote, because on the 4th of April, 1857, Outram announced to Hanelock that a treaty of peace had been signed with Persia.

Lt. Col. F.W. Buwough stated that 'In the early months of 1857, with other circumstances, it led me to believe that the plot for revolt was not recent, and known to a select few only in each Regiment.'²⁴

Raghoo Nath Mahadow Wankday, in his deposition before the magistrate of Satara, said that 'great and small Rajas had formed a conspiracy for the purpose of seducing the British Regiments.'²⁵ In his deposition, Kanhya Prashad Mahajan of Kanpur, said that a plot existed in Kanpur between the Nana and the Sepoys.'²⁶

22. Jiwan Lal's Diary account under Date September the 4th, 1857. Metcalfe, Sir T.—Two native Narratives of the Mutiny at Delhi (Westminster—1898) pp. 219-22.
23. Majumdar, Dr. R.C.—*Op. Cit.*, p. 191.
24. Memorandum No. 133 from F.W. Buwoughs, Lt. Col. Commanding 17th Regt. No. 1 to Captain J.H. Chamberlain, Assistant Government Superintendent for Suppression of Dacoities etc., Lucknow. Mutiny Basta No. 7. Lucknow Collectorate.
25. Foreign secret consultations, 25th Sept. 1857. No. 635.
26. Mutiny Narrative, N.W.P., Agra, Cawnpore District Deposition. No. 20, p. 47.

Thus making full preparations inside the country and negotiating for foreign help, the Nana set his foot for the final assault.

The deplorable conditions of the Indians. Whereas the Nana was eager to free his country, he was equally sensitive to retrieve the conditions of the people. The people as a whole had lost their political independence, they had become slaves, their social recognition was reduced to insignificance, they had lost their economic standing and they were down-trodden in their own house. Even their very existence was at stake. The Nana gave them a call either to do or die, and himself took up the cause as the leader of the masses.

The British had showered so much indignation upon the Indians that the cup was full to the brim. The Nana's power of toleration was exhausted. He took up the cause of his people along with their rights and reminded them of their duty towards the nation and the society. He made them to realise that rights could be taken only when the duty was done, and the duty should be done with singular devotion and sincerity. Gains come only after sufferings, struggle gives freedom. The sacrifices and the blood have to be given to the altar of freedom.

Thus, the full preface of the revolt was ready, and when the explosive situation caught fire, Nana flung into that and took up the lead of the nation against the British.

The speech of Mr. Drummond in British Parliament on June 7, 1858, is a great testimony of the fact that India miserably suffered under the British rule. The conduct of many of our young officers towards the nation is cruel and tyrannical....” Our behaviour is marked by a high degree of pride and insolence. Now if we are proud of our aristocracy and mindful of their dignity how can we think that these things do not rankle in the breasts of men who can trace up their hereditary rank and their possessions to a period anterior to the time of Alexander the Great?... Are we so foolish as to imagine that, because they do not retort and insult the moment they do not feel it... Vengeance sleeps long, but never dies ... The people in India are generally dissatisfied and that they have too much cause to be so. There is disaffection enough for half a

dozen rebellions.... The root of the whole evil is the doctrine that India is a country to be exploited for the benefit of the civil service. If we are going to look upon India as we have looked upon it hitherto as a mere place of plunder for English officials, we shall surely lose it and shall deserve to lose it.

Herbert Spencer in his book 'Social Statistics' has also given causes of Indian discontent on the basis of official records that 'the vast fortunes acquired by the Company's officials were obtained by the most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country, the demands for the revenue were exorbitant and iniquitous, the pitiless taxation extracted from the poor ryots nearly half the produce of the soil. "The masses were impoverished because generation after generation the aim of the Company was to squeeze as large as possible a fortune out of the country, as quickly as might be." Thus it is clear that the general condition of India was very bad under the British rule at that time.

The causes of the war of 1857. The uprising of 1857 was of a national character representing the desire of the whole nation to oust the alien rulers from the country. The native soldiers took the initiative and ignited the first fire of the revolt and later they were joined by the civil population, from all rank and file, from every caste, class, creed and colour, to give that the outlook of a true national character, and thus expressed the 'General will' of the masses to root out the foreign rule, by armed conflict without caring for their life, property and dangers involved in the rising. There were many causes that prompted the soldiers to take up arms for the defence of these sacred traditions and culture which was so very dear to them. Right from the peasants, workers, artisans, and labourers at the bottom and the Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, Peshwa and the Emperor at the highest level, joined the fray and made the rising a national war.

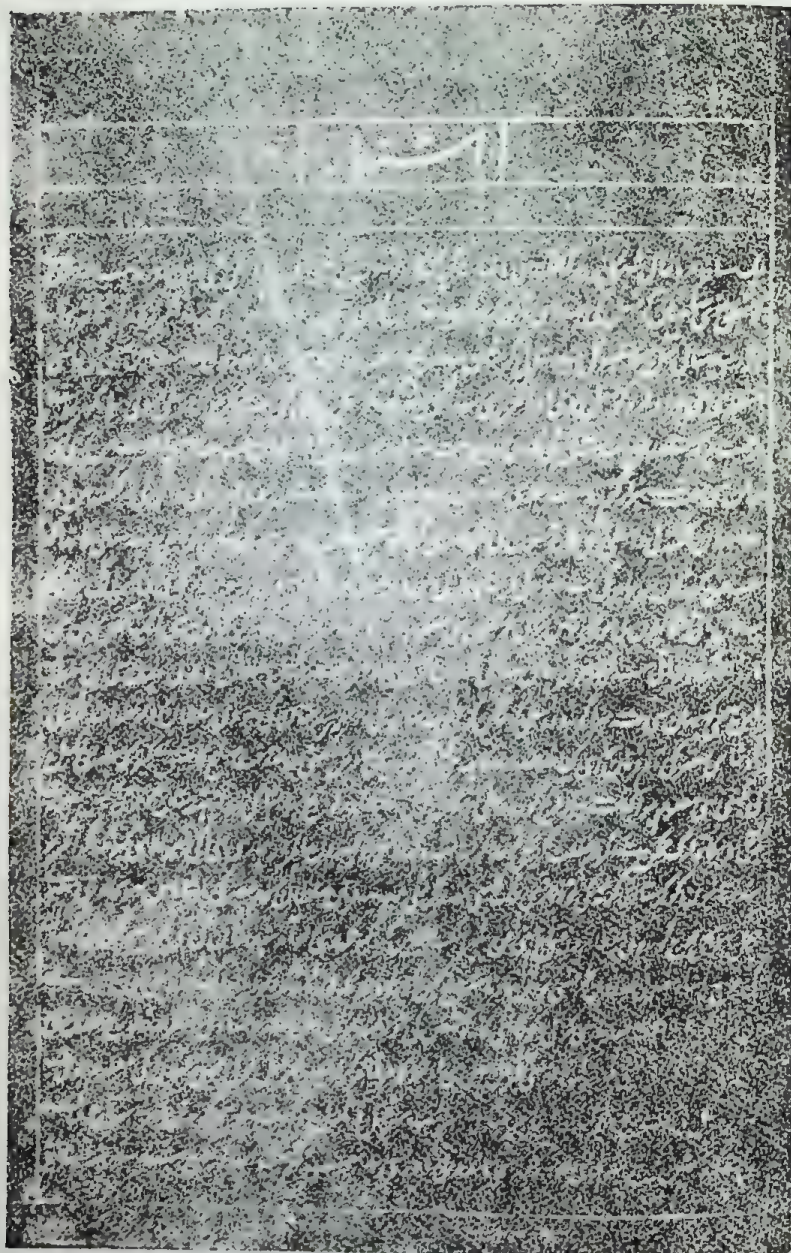
The rising was full of patriotism and highest kinds of sacrifices, sufferings, toils, starvations, hunger, thirst, and even of deaths of horrible nature were all therein. The mass killings, heinous crimes, collective fines brutalities were all showered by the British upon the rebels, and yet the great war of national liberation continued for more than two years. Then was it not the national war? Were not the two nations fighting against each other?

Certainly the two nations were fighting against each other, the one for its survival and the other for its rule. National issues were involved in it. Its area of operation was the major part of the country, thousands of people laid down their lives in fighting against the British. The Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II, the last Peshwa Nana Saheb, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Khan Bahadur Khan, Rani Laxmi Bai, Shahazad Firoz Shah and others were the leaders of the rising who did not have selfish interests. They sacrificed all their pleasures, comforts, luxuries, palaces, and worldly enjoyments and voluntarily embraced all miseries and even they were hanged in the gallows for the sake of their motherland. Then was the revolution of the selfish persons ?

Never, that was not so. Contemporary British writers have given a twisted account to suit their interests and to keep their power and rule intact in India. They gave a very distorted view of the facts and coloured their description in such a way that the rising looked like a sepoy mutiny.

Let us examine it from different points of view.

The 1857 national uprising is a very important event in the history of India. It has caught the attention and imagination of many historians of India and abroad, who have tried to interpret its causes and nature according to their own view points. Both the causes and nature of the rising are still a subject of lively disputes. The eminent Indian writers have considered it as a national rising and the first war of Indian Independence. But the British writers have considered it to be a mutiny. Outram regarded it as a muslim conspiracy, exploiting Hindu grievances, some regard it as a aristocratic plot, wherein gun-powder was pre-maturely touched off by the spark of the Meerut outbreak. Also it has been asserted as purely a military mutiny. Some historians regard its as an attempt jointly made by the old conservative Hindus and Muslims of India to gain their lost past. The princes had opposed the British, with their own methods. After their defeat the Marathas, the Sikhs, and the Muslim Nawabs and Zamindars retired into brooding isolation. In the attempt of the uprising the conservative India, hoped to live to its own glory of the past, but it could not escape the challenge of the west. The impact of the west was an inevitable one. It



NANA SAHEB'S ISHTIHAR

This Ishtihar is dated July 6, 1857 in which Peshwa Nana Saheb gave a call to his countrymen to unite against the British intentions to convert them to Christianity.

caused irritation and agony amongst the upper class of India. The new measures introduced by the British were interpreted as undermining the old ancestral traditions and customs. The speed with which the social political reforms were introduced in India by the British, increased the grievances of the people all the more and it created a social and political background which made it possible for military grievances to convulse the whole country. India was once again on war path. But alas ! the struggle ended in failure. The Indians were vanquished and the British came out from the ordeal successful. It encouraged the British historians to view its causes and nature according to points of their interests.

According to V.A. Smith in his book Oxford History of India, it was not the national uprising but purely a sepoy mutiny. The causes primarily present in the mutiny were military causes. The Indian princes, and Muslims, who took part in the mutiny had either personal or local or regional grievances, and they had joined hands with the mutineers in the hope of getting back their lost position. Smith writes that the Indian princes had no special grievances, but they were caught in the trap and got agitated with the fever of unrest from events around them. The whole order of the large land lords also felt the same fever. He says that the conquests of the British alarmed all the principalities of India. After the annexation of the Punjab, they began to wonder as to where the British policy of war and conquest would stop. They psychologically felt nervous and insecure. This was one of the main causes of their mental unrest. The impacts of western innovations were calculated to doom both the Hindus and Muslims. The promotion of western education at the cost of oriental learning was regarded as a deliberate attempt on the part of the British to convert Indians to Christianity. The propagation of western thinking was regarded as an act of interference in their educational, social, religious, and cultural life. Social reforms were looked upon as an act of encroachment on Indian society, and injured the feelings of both Hindus and Muslims.

V.A. Smith further traces the factors which led the Muslims of India to come openly against the British rule in 1857. The Muslims were the chief political force and power in India, before

the advent of the British. By the 18th century the Marathas had challenged the Muslims, but still the Muslims in general and Bahadur Shah the last Mughal emperor in Delhi were regarded in the shadow of their past. The British rule made the Muslims to lose their glory and empire both. The Muslim Molvies had lost their favoured position in the criminal courts in the British judiciary system. This alienated their feeling very much. Smith says that the Muslims in general preferred the British rule to Hindus, that is the Marathas, but only so long as their traditions and religion were respected. The orthodox opinion of the Muslims became anti-British. The Shia community of the Muslims was outraged by the fall of Oudh, and the Sunnies were disgraced to see the steady denigration and degradation of Bahadur Shah. The uprising was, according to V. Smith a foreboding of the end of the old familiar age and a fear of the unknown future, but it was not a popular revolt. The most he can say is that 'it provided a social soil in which army discontent could germinate and grow. The soldiers found society in general sympathy with them, and they revolted. V. Smith says that peasants did not participate actively in it, because they feared more to lose than to gain. Madras and Bombay Presidencies were hardly touched by the mutiny.' There is also little evidence of deliberate conspiracy. V. Smith compares the 1857 revolt with the revolt of the Jacobins in 1795 in France.

So, according to V. Smith the 1857 rising was not a popular revolt, but only a sepoy mutiny. He traces a long list of military causes. He says that in 1857, the total military strength was 2,38,000, of whom 38,000 were Europeans. Each Presidency had its own army, but it was only in Bengal that the army revolted. The Bengal army numbered 1,51,000 of whom 23,000 were Europeans. This uneven proportion was the cause which encouraged the Bengal sepoys to revolt. The Bengal army composed of high class Brahmans who were orthodox in their outlook and behaviour. The greased cartridges proved the immediate cause for revolt. In his words, the personal and regional causes played greater part rather than any national one.

V. Smith presented only the British point of views. He deliberately ignored the remote and latent causes, which gave the rising the national character. He greatly exaggerated the military

causes in order to cover the other more important factors, 'only to pronounce the rising of a sepoy revolt. He attempted in his conclusion to suit the British imperialism in India directly and to discourage the feelings of nationalism and unity conclusively.

Dr. S.N. Sen in his book 'Eighteen Fifty Seven' traces at length, the causes of 1857 in detailed description. He says that obnoxious grease by itself could hardly cause such a mighty conflagration. Soldiers thought that they had ungrudgingly shed their blood to the services of their white masters who were thankless about their high sense of sacrifices. They annexed and conquered one after another kingdoms. And for what? In the process they lost their religion. They were socially degraded. They were considered to be outcasts in their own community. So, they revolted against the British. Besides the military causes there were economic causes as well. The British taxation policy left India impoverished. It only benefited the interest of the British. All high posts and lucrative business were in British hands. Millions of Indians became destitute. The British economic policy had made India and Indians, bankrupt and poor, and the British flourished at the expense of Indians. Their industry in England also progressed at the cost of India. So, the economic factor was the potential cause which prompted the lower and middle class of India to join hands in 1857 rising.

Dr. Sen writes that the Emperor of Delhi, Bahadur Shah II, the Wale of Lucknow and the heir of Peshwa, Nana Saheb were one with them in this respect and cause. So, the unity of these three big leaders of India who practically represented the whole class of the people of India, made the character of the rising national. Bihar was represented by Kunwar Singh. So, the whole of northern India except some isolated parts became the centre of 1857 uprising. Dr. Sen does not speak of any war of Indian Independence, but certainly he comes to the conclusion that it was not a simply sepoy mutiny, but was a mass revolt against the British rule. The revolt had many heterogeneous elements and divergent interests involved in it, but ultimately the rebels were united against a common enemy.

According to Dr. Sen, the revolt of the sepoys was attributed mainly to the enlistment of high caste Brahmans and Rajputs in the Bengal Army, but Colonel Hunter points out that caste did not cause the mutiny. Lord Dalhousie has generally been held responsible for the outbreak, but Lord William Bentinck, Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough had each by some act of omission or commission dienerated orthodox opinion in the country. The alien government was feared more by its armed forces, hence people had to resort to armed revolution in order to meet force by force. Dr. Sen writes that if the sepoy was wavering between apathy and anti-path, the people in general were not better disposed towards the government. The social isolation of the ruling race, generated contempt for the ruled, and vice versa. Agrarian reforms adversely reacted upon the agricultural class in India. Zamindars and farmers both were against the British rule. The princely order and Hindus and Muslim aristocracy was threatened with ruin and extinction. Lord Dalhousie's policies contributed to a very great extent to the rising. His policy of lapse and imperialist policy greatly annoyed the Indian princes, and they became anti-British. Finally the last Mughal Emperor was not treated well by the British. Bahadur Shah II was humiliated. The Nana was unjustly deprived of his rights. These two high personalities embodied in themselves the opinion of their caste communities and religion. They rose to the occasion. Dr. Sen says that the sepoy revolt of 1857 only favoured their plan of a last attempt to regain their lost power.

Dr. Sen appears to have based his opinion purely on documentary evidence and ignored the rational causes, which were more potential and real than military and social causes. The actions and deeds of the leaders of the rising spoke more loudly for their cause, than the pronouncements of the British, but remained unheard by many pro-British writers.

Dr. R.C. Majumdar in his book 'The sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857', has traced the causes of the revolt as usual, he describes in detail the military, social and political factors as Dr. Sen has done. In his opinion the described military causes were more forceful and patent which led the sepoys to revolt. Dr. Majumdar suggests

that it was not a national war and objected to the 1857 centenary celebrations. In his opinion Bahadur Shah did not foment the revolt and at first refused to accept the leadership of the nationalists, and that he had no previous knowledge of the rising. He says that neither Bahadur Shah nor Nana Saheb had the character of a national leader. The people of the country were with; and not against the British. The revolt originated differently at different places, due to local or regional grievances of the people and the sepoys grievances contributed to the outbreak of 1857 rising. Dr. Majumdar says that there was no pre-planning and that the mutiny was a military rising and nothing more.

Dr. Tara Chand in his book "History of the Freedom movement in India" has analysed the causes of 1857 rising in a more elaborate manner. He has taken into account the remote causes as the main background upon which the immediate causes played a great part. Unlike V. Smith, Dr. Tara Chand has taken more positive views. He states that during the second half of the 18th century Britain was undergoing a great change. A new social order based on economic and political ideologies was taking place in England. This is called the period of romanticism. Across the English Channel, there was another revolution that was taking place in France. This French Revolution inaugurated a new era in France and stimulated the great progress in Europe. It swept away the old fended system and gave three watchwords, *i.e.* equality, liberty and fraternity to all.

These two revolutions released such a great force which eventually broke the bonds of poverty, intellectual slavery and despotic authority, this also inaugurated the era of nationalism. India and Indian masses through their spokesman were sensible enough to receive this message of nationalism. Thus the idea of nationalism came in India and gradually it developed rapidly. Bentham's gospel of greatest happiness of the greatest number also made a great impression in India and the masses as a whole had a new conception of happiness. Thus there was a deep stir in social life in India and a movement started against the old for the new.

Napolean's wars greatly affected the England's policy in India, for they feared, lest the independent and national feelings

of French-Revolution should influence the thinking of the Indian masses. But it was there. Pride and prejudices began to show their traits in English character. The Indians became conscious of the facts that British rule was a burden on them, rather than blessings. The British power in India after 1800, A. D. came to be regarded as no more than an accessory and an instrument for ensuring the necessary conditions of law and order, by which the potentially vast Indian market could be conquered for British industry at home.

In tracing the religious causes Dr. Tara Chand says that in order to propagate Christianity it was necessary for the Christian power to remain in power for the fulfilment of the missionary objectives. British rule in India gave much attention to education, because they knew that once they were able to influence the Indian mind to their favour and make them forget their past glory and culture, the British rule would be able to govern Indians very easily for a long time. Indian intellectuals realised this and instead they developed their own national feelings for the better of India. like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and others.

The British rule in India, became beneficial only to the British and the poor Indians were left helpless. Dr. Tara Chand says that the agrarian reforms of the British Governor-General were also not beneficial to local farmers. After the permanent settlement in Bengal and Northern Sarkar (the present U. P. and Bihar) a struggle commenced between the local government and the Zamindars everywhere in those parts. The struggle was the beginning of a big confrontation between the two. Dr. Tara Chand says that the collectors had to cope with the situation with armed force. There was virtually an armed conflict between the two and the 1857 rising was a big form of this war. Actually the 1857 rising was the culmination of a process which began decades before. This struggle was in fact, everywhere, the rehearsal of the grand battle no matter whatsoever would happen to them. There was a desire to fight the British. The British reforms in land and agriculture, only benefited a few. It ignored the interest and welfare of a vast mass of oppressed cultivators, whose resentment and dissatisfaction became one of the causes of 1857 rising.

As to the reason why the deccan did not take the part in 1857 rising, Dr. Tara Chand writes that Riyotwri system of land tennure was introduced in the South which was very much better than permanent settlement. So, a cultivator of the south was not so aggrieved as a cultivator of the north. Therefore, the dissatisfaction of a large number of masses became a big cause of 1857 rising.

The judicial system of the British rule also provoked great reaction amongst Hindus and Muslims, as they were less governed by their own religion, and culture and more by the British rule. This was also a potential cause.

The semi-military character of the British rule also did not fit in the Indian soil. A number of civil departments were run by the army officers. The political department which dealt with the Indian states was almost wholly monopolised by the army officers. So the principle of public welfare was to a great extent absent. Dr. Tara Chand justified the sepoy revolt as a national uprising since it was not possible to end British rule in India without the participation of the sepoys, who were all Indians.

Social and economic consequences of the British rule disintegrated the rural economy. India became poorer and poorer day by day and Britain became richer and richer day by day. The raw material was taken out of India to serve the needs of British factories. Labourers became jobless. This made them anti-British. Dr. Tara Chand says that the consequences of the British rule were dismal in the extreme. The complete elimination of the Indians from the higher services and the total exclusion from army responsible position had the most untoward effect both immediately and in the long run.

Hindus and Muslims principalities chiefs and military class were deprived of their professions and positions. This factor made the emergence of Indian middle class. This was the sequence of British anti-Indian policy. This aggrieved middle class played a great part in bringing 1857 a real rising.

Dr. Tara Chand says that the British destroyed the age old established intermediaries, the Zamindars, farmers and village-

panchayats. This led to the break up of that ancient social frame work within which the agricultural population of India had lived for centuries. The village communities were just like Republics. The collective way of life was one of the features of Indian society. The westernization of India by the British, broke the society that caused a great dismay and ultimately the 1857 rising.

Thus according to Dr. Tara Chand, the decline of trade and industry, the pro-christian propagation of the British, their anti-religious reforms, their disregards to Indian feelings, the introduction of English system of education were primarily the remote cause of 1857 rising. The grievances of the sepoys, the greased cartridges and the discontentment amongst the sepoys were the immediate causes of the rising.

Mr. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his book "The Indian War of Independence" of 1857 gives a new outlook and a more critical angle of vision which made him to come to the conclusion that 1857 rising was, in fact, the first war of Indian Independence. Mr. Savarkar, in 1905, while he was a student in England, came to know many historical facts and documents which he studied at the Indian Office Library, London and wrote his famous book there (1909), on the strength of which he based his arguments and conclusions. Mr. Savarkar writes that, it is a simple truism, patent even to the uneducated that even the most tiny house cannot be built without a foundation, strong enough to support its weight. He says that many historians who describe the 1857 as a mutiny are no better than Knaves. In all great religious and political revolutions, it is almost impossible to connect together links, apparently inconsistent, without thoroughly understanding the principles which are at their roots. He asks the questions, that if the revolution had been due only to the cartridges, why did Nana Saheb, the Emperor of Delhi, the Queen of Jhansi, and Khan Bahadur Khan of Rohilkhand join it? These were surely not in the English army nor were they compelled to break the cartridges with their teeth. They also knew their fate and the fate of their followers in case of defeat. Then why did they risk their life, property and everything? The answer is simple to understand. They were inspired by the idea of 'SWADHARMA' and 'SWARAJ'. The great principle of Swadharma and Swaraj were very dear to Hindus and Muslims

even more dear than life, and in these two principles lies the root-principle of the Revolutionary war of 1857. It manifested the principle of love for religion and love for motherland, and the sense of highest kind of sacrifice. The Emperor, Bahadur Shah in his Royal Proclamation at the time of rising of 1857 proclaimed these principles.

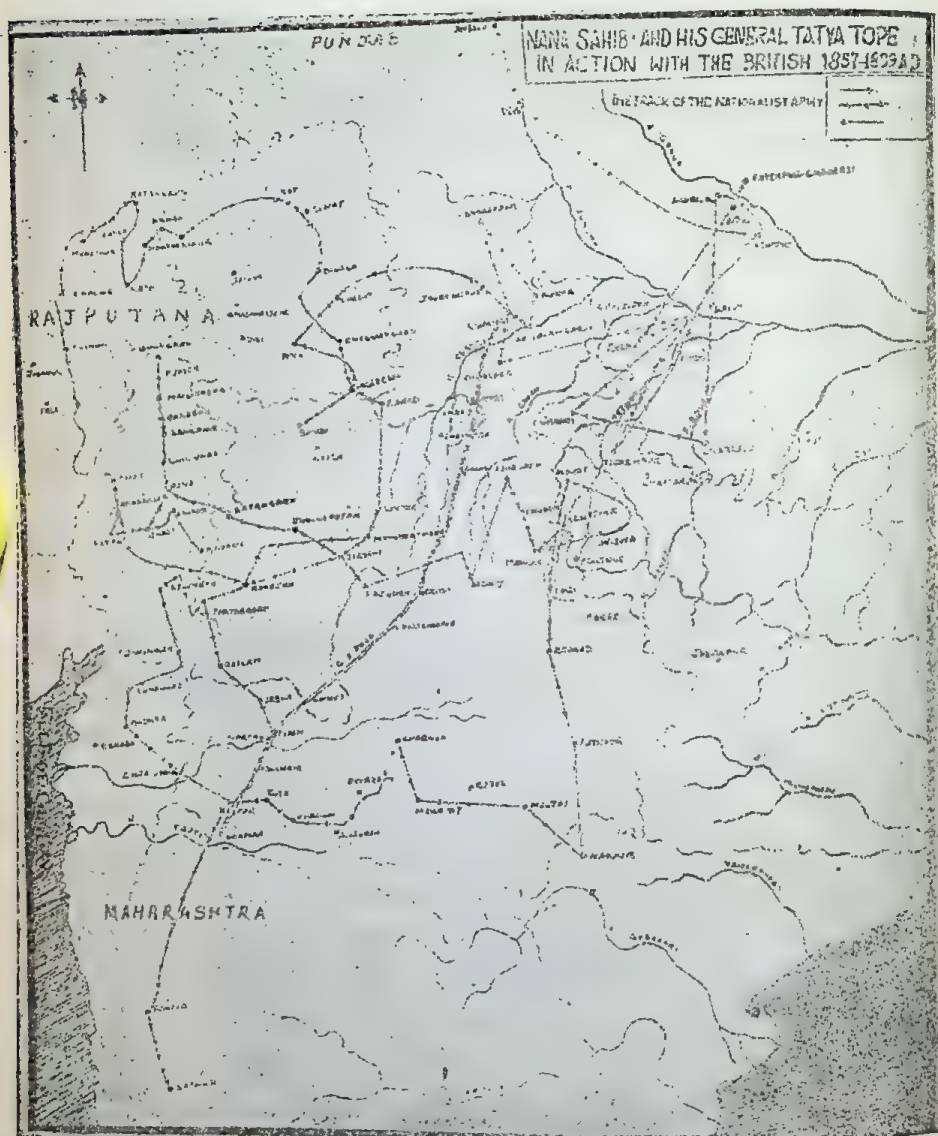
Mr. Savarkar, in his quest to trace the causes of 1857 goes as far back as 1757, the British rule began to extend to all parts of India, and Indian states began to fall one by one before the marching armies of the British. Thus by 1857, India had lost all her territory and was engulfed by the British Empire. When the Indian people and princes found themselves slaves, they could not bear the idea, and resolved to fight for the freedom, which was their birth right.

When Lord Dalhousie came to India, as Governor-General the seeds of discontent had gone deep all over Hindustan. Rajas and Maharajas were burning in their hearts at the loss of their freedom. Lord Dalhousie's policy added fuel to the fire, when he annexed the Punjab. The expansionist policy greatly annoyed the Hindu and the Muslim princes alike.

In the state of Satara there was the image of a past magnificent Hindu Empire, when Satara was annexed, it filled the hearts of Hindus with dismay. By annexing Nagpur, Dalhousie robbed an extensive part of India against the wishes of the people, who became anti-British. So was the case with Nana Saheb, who was unjustly deprived of his legitimate right. Nana Saheb rose to the occasion and took an oath to fight the British upto the last for swaraj. He had a great friend in his General Tatya Tope, who organised the army to fight against the British. Laxmi Bai joined hands with Nana Saheb in this struggle.

The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah was also unhappy to see the affairs of Hindustan. In spite of his old age, he once again thought to take the lead of his nation to fight the British and to oust them from the land of his fore-fathers.

Mr. Savarkar says that, thus a band of patriots assembled together, made a plan to fight, organised army, and went throughout



India to organise the revolution. The Indian masses volunteered themselves for the great cause of freedom and all was set, the 1857 revolution took place. The date was fixed as 30th May, 1857, somehow the Meerut outbreak occurred on 10th May, 1857. Bahadur Shah proclaimed independence at Delhi-Red-Fort. Nana Saheb acclaimed him as Emperor and himself assumed the charge of the Peshwa.

Thus according to Mr. Savarkar the 1857 rising in fact was the first war of Indian Independence.

Thus it can be said that 1857 rising was to a great extent the first attempt of Indians to struggle for their independence through armed conflict against the British. It expressed and represented the great desire for freedom of the nation as a whole.

Nana Saheb and the Battle Fronts of the War. The greased-cartridges had already poisoned the mind of innumerable Hindu sepoys, and Mangal Pandey of 34th Native Infantry, stationed at Barakpur in Bengal, was the first to become so sensitive, as to openly revolt against that injustice. He was a young soldier of twenty seven years of age with seven years service in the army. On March 29, 1857, Mangal Pandey fired the first shot of the revolt at his officer, Sergeant Major Hughson and wounded him. His second shot was aimed at Lieutenant Baugh who escaped the assault and in the mean time Mangal Pandey was over powered by British officer with the help of another Havildar Sheikh Paltoo. Though Mangal Pandey tried to commit suicide he could only wound himself. He was court-martialled and was sentenced to death. On April 8th, 1857, he was hanged and in this way Mangal Pandey was the first man who sacrificed himself on the altar of freedom. In the early days of May, the 34th National Infantry was disbanded on the ground that it could not be trusted, and the British started losing faith in the Indian army.

That news soon spread throughout and the sacrifice of Mangal Pandey filled the hearts of his compatriots with sympathy for him and revenge with the British.

May 10, 1857 the rising actually broke out in Meerut, twenty one days in advance of the scheduled date, i.e. May 31st, 1857.

The next morning on May 11th the Meerut rebels crossed the Jamuna and entered Delhi. That was the signal of complete rebellion. Delhi welcomed the rebels and the war of independence started on the 14th May, the news of Meerut and Delhi rebellions reached Kanpur, that made the atmosphere of the town very tense and uncertain. The officer in command of the garrison was Major-General Sir Hugh Wheeler. He was an officer of high reputation and was well over 70 years of age at that time. Mr. C.G. Hillersdon was the district Collector of Kanpur, at that time. The whole of the environment was surcharged with suspicion, hatred, distrust and disbelief and the situation could become alarming and explosive at any time. But "All quiet at Kanpur" was the message of Wheeler to the Governor-General on the 18th May. On 20th May he wired "All well here and excitement less."²⁷ The news of mutinies by soldiers of one place or the other poured into Kanpur regularly which made the sensitive sepoys very restive. But again on 21st May Wheeler telegraphed "A good of excitement on 23rd be wired to Lucknow for re-inforcements for he feared the sepoys on the verge of revolting. For this reason the Queen's birthday salute had to be cancelled,"²⁸ on the 24th May to avoid giving offence to the sepoys. During those periods some occasional omissions or commissions on the part of the British military officers also caused great concern amongst the sepoys and by that it became ardent that they could raise their voice and arms against their white masters at any time.

Sensing the explosive situation of Kanpur at that time the British authorities thought it better to take help from the influential Indians living there and, their eyes fell on Nana Saheb who once belonged to the highest ruling family of India. On 26th May Mr. Hillersdon asked Nana Saheb for help in that great hour of their need. The Nana very rightly realised the gravity of the situation and sent about 300 men of all arms with two guns to serve the British.

A pertinent question arises whether the Nana volunteered his services or was his assistance solicited by the civil authorities of

27. Parliamentary papers 1857, Volume 30, page 308. Inclosure 21 in No. 19 and page 309. Inclosure 28 in No. 19.

28. District Gazetteer, Kanpur, page 165.

Kanpur. Dr Sen is of the opinion that he certainly offered his hospitality.²⁹ Shepherd also writes that "The Nana was on friendly and intimate terms with many of the officers in the city. He seemed to have inspired our Magistrate and Collector Mr. Hillersdon with such confidence, that he decided on placing his own family as well as some other families under the Nana's protection."³⁰ But the families refused. Mowbray Thomson one of the four survivors, unambiguously states³¹ that the Magistrate invited the Nana to take charge of the treasury. Obviously, neither Hillersdon nor Wheeler had any reason at that moment to distrust the Nana. There is also a unanimity about the number of guns the Nana brought with him, but the numerical strength of his armed retainers is variously estimated from two hundred to six hundred. Tatya Tope in his deposition said that the Collector Mr. Hillersdon wrote to the Nana to bring his troops in from Bithoor. He (Tatya Tope) along with his master the Nana went with about one hundred sepoys and three hundred matchlockmen and two guns to the Collector's house at Kanpur.³² He thought that denial would mean open enmity with the British masters, and acceptance would mean his subordination to them. Nana preferred the second course in order to gain time and also to muster support and help for himself amongst the conspirators. The scheduled date for the resort was given as May 31st and so he had to wait till the appointed time arrived. Kanpur Gazetteer says that "Nana Saheb came to Kanpur on 22nd May with 200 men and two guns. On 25th May, he was given the charge of the Treasury." Nana accepted the offer from Mr. Hillersdon and as a token of his good gestures, exhibition of his good faith, he on 22 May sent, 200 armed men with two guns under the charge of Tatya Tope. His troops on 25th of May were allotted the task of guarding the treasury,³³ which happened to be near the Nana's own residence at Nawabganj in Kanpur. The Company's

29. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 132.

30. Shepherd, W.J.—*Op. Cit.*—page 15.

31. Thomson, Mowbray—*Op. Cit.* pp. 32-33.

32. Military Department Proceedings No. 5 of 1859 consultations dated 2nd September No. 144, National Archives, New Delhi.

33. Shepherd, W.J. "A personal Narrative of the outbreak and massacre at Cawnpur during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857"—(Lucknow—1879)—pp. 5-6.

53rd Native Infantry was put to protect the treasury along with the Nana's men.

The Nana was himself residing in the civil lines of the cantonment. The Nana succeeded in retaining the faith of the British³⁴ in himself. He utilised the opportunity in meeting various people and knew their mind and heart for himself. The Nana secretly got into touch with sepoy leaders with a view to inciting them to revolt."³⁵

Nana Saheb had five lakhs of pounds in English banks in 1856. He gradually withdrew the deposits by the time of the outbreak and only three thousand pounds remained in balance.³⁶ This clearly shows the inner intention of Nana Saheb that he was preparing for the final settlement with the British by armed conflict.

The situation in Kanpur became worse day by day, and hence General Wheeler preferred the entrenchment³⁷ as a safe refuge and well protected area for himself, his men and other English men, women and children, had shifted there according to his plans and all his loyal men and English persons took shelter there.

After a long suspense and pause, the revolt broke out in Kanpur on 4th of June,³⁸ late at night. In the night, a pistol was fired thrice and a bright fire was lit. That was the signal for revolt. The sepoys rose from their sleeps, and realising the arrival of the fateful hour, gathered and declared their fidelity to the cause of the nation. The 2nd Cavalry and the 1st Native Infantry, were the first to revolt, later they were joined by 53rd and 56th of the Indian regiments. They all revolted and forming a body marched to

34. *Ibid...* page 15.

35. Williams, Lieut. Col. "Synopsis of the Eudence. Memorandum on the Investigations regarding the outbreak at Kanpur in June 1857". page 3.

36. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*—page 224.

37. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*—page 224.

38. Thomson, Capt. Mcwbray "The story of Cawnpore" (London 1859) pp. 39-40.

Nawabganj. They broke open the treasury,³⁹ distributed the money amongst themselves, burnt and plundered the European houses on the west side of the city, broke open the Jail and released the prisoners, cut the cables of the bridge of boats which connected the town with Unnao. They also set fire to Magistrate's court and burnt all the civil and criminal records.⁴⁰

After they marched on the road towards Delhi and halted at Kalyanpur,⁴¹ presumably to receive their leader Nana Saheb, who had already made his contacts with them while living in Kanpur.

The Nana was very quick to grapple the opportunity. He seized it and appeared before the rebels at Kalyanpur. There he talked to them at length and in details and when they agreed to accept him as their King, he assumed the full charge of the situation and ordered them to march back to Kanpur and capture it. At first he refused to go to Delhi or to fight the British troops, but later yielded to force.⁴²

The British persons and accounts present a different picture and state the situation in such a way as to belittle the situation, importance and image of Nana Saheb. Their main purpose was to give the idea that it was not the Nana who organised the mutineers, but it were the mutineers who invited the Nana to take charge of them all. But the future actions and course of events show that the Nana was the person behind that revolt and he organised them all.

Tatya Tope deposed that the Nana had been forced under duress vile to join the sepoys cause. Sir George Forrest objects and points out that the Nana had two guns and a body of armed retainers with him.⁴³ The story of violence therefore be rejected.

39 Trevenyan, Rt. Hon'ble, Sir George—*Op. Cit*, pp. 71.

40 Trevenyan, Rt. Hon'ble, Sir George—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 89.

41 Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*—page 228.

"The three thousand sepoys at Kalanpur are said to have elected Nana Saheb as their King".

42. Malleon, Col. G.B.—"History of the Indian Mutiny" Vol. III, page 515.

43. Forest, Sir G.W.—History of the Indian Mutiny (London—1904-12) Vol II—page 420.

The Nana at once set himself to the task of organising the army then and there. Subedar Tika Singh was made the Chief Commander of the Cavalry and was given the Title of General. New regulations for the army were also issued. After setting the army in order a grand procession was organised with an elephant at the front, carrying the flag of freedom. On the same day it was proclaimed on the beat of drums, that the Government was of Nana Saheb, and his orders would prevail. Thereafter, the Nana took over the reigns of Government of free India in his own lands. At last he realised his dreams.

On return from Kalyanpur the Nana ordered the siege of the entrenchment and simultaneously sent a note to General Wheeler intimating his order to assault the entrenchment. "We are going to begin the attack. We want to warn you and therefore send you this previous notice." The letter reached General Wheeler on the evening of June 6, 1857. The actual siege of the entrenchment commenced at about 10 A.M. in the morning of June 7.⁴⁵

The whole city and the surrounding area fell in the hands of Nana Saheb and he became the ruler of the land. The Magazine and all arms and ammunition fell in his hands, and he employed fourteen heavy guns—two of his own, two heavy guns of the mutineers and ten more brought from the magazine, to shower shells into the entrenchment.⁴⁶

The news of the Nana's assuming full control of the city and its government⁴⁷ spread like wild-fire. Many persons from far and near came to join the band of his army and to strengthen the hands of the rebels. Many influential men joined him in his great work of consolidation. Prominent amongst them were Chaudhari Mansahali of Rasulabad, Jassa Singh of Fetehtpur-Chaurasi, Moti Singh of Nanamau, Gurudatt Singh of Fatehtpur, Durga Prasad of

44. Mutiny Narrative, N.W.P. Agra, Cawnpore District deposition No. 23 pp. 54-58.

45. Trevelyan, Rt. Hon'ble, Sir George—"Cawnpore, (London—1899) page 86.

46. Shepherd, W.J.—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 59-60.

47. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, p. 143.

Sanchadi, Raja Daryao Chand of Nar, Sati Prasad of Shivrajpur, Debi Singh of Chauhani, and many others. Besides these many other Zamindars, Landlords also joined hands with the Nana.

The Nana had managed by then, ample money, arms and ammunition, food and other essential commodities and had organised a strong army to rule and defend the land.

For twenty one days the entrenchment was subjected to heavy fire by day and by night, that had shaken the condition of the garrison completely.

Nana as Peshwa. The Nana continued fighting against the besieged garrison and made elaborate arrangements to organise civil administration. The British rule vanished and was replaced by the Nana's rule. The green flag of the revolution was hoisted in the city, and on June 7, a proclamation of Nana Saheb was issued in Hindi and Urdu throughout the city and was distributed amongst the citizens and the sepoys. Both the Hindus and the Muslims were asked to save their religion jointly and unitedly. The villagers and citizens of Kanpur strongly backed the Rising.⁴⁸

Prominent citizens of Kanpur were called and their co-operation was sought in the great task. In the great Darbar the Nana, by the consent and desire of all, appointed Hulas Singh as city Kotwal and Chief Magistrate. Mulla, another person was appointed as the head and incharge of all the arrangements for supplying provisions to the army.

For maintaining justice and administration, a court was instituted to settle civil and criminal cases. Jwala Prasad, Azimullah Khan, Ram Lal and others were appointed judges and Baga Bhatta was made President of the court. Rules and regulations were made for severely punishing the guilty and disorderly persons. Thus the Nana gave peace and security to all his subjects, except those who were either British or favoured the British. The Nana also

48. Foreign Secret Proceedings 31st July, 1857, No. 85—National Archives, New Delhi.

organised his system in order to be in full knowledge of all the happenings.

The Nana also organised his army and made elaborate arrangements, rules and regulations for the maintenance of discipline, order, the supply to army, in an orderly and regular way and maintained the regular flow of all the arms and ammunitions to his sepoys.

The Nana made Rao Saheb the chief administrator of Brahamaverta, Rao Saheb took up the post with zeal and enthusiasm and declared on beat of drums, the beginning of the reign of Peshwa Nana Saheb. He attacked the police post of Brahamaverta, killed its Thanedar and appointed his own man Chunni Lal Thanedar. The flag of the Peshwa of crimson colour was hoisted on all public buildings and the British flag was removed.

The victory celebrations were held in Kanpur and in Bithoor and the British regime for the time being vanished from that place. The Nana was greeted with twenty one cannon-salutes; whereas the Nana realised his dreams and the revolutioneers also got their able leader, who had fixed aim and objective before him. He had plans, the power and the resources to execute them all. That leader was Peshwa Nana Saheb.⁴⁹ The king of Delhi, the shadow Mughal Emperor, though wished to exterminate the British rule in India, was weak, powerless and incompetent to do any physical act by himself. The Nawab of Oudh was a prisoner in the hands of the British and so his life was at the mercy of his white masters. The Nana was the only leader, who had vigour, youth, power and strong determination to translate his thoughts into action and had a fertile brain to think. He had also a rich heritage round which he could rally all his supporters and sepoys for one common national cause.

The Nana on the other hand continued his armed struggle with the besieged garrison. There was constant firing from the Indian army, causing havoc amongst the British officers, men and

49. "The Hindu Patriot" The issue of July 16th, 1857, pp. 277-78. (National Library Calcutta).

women. The miseries of the besieged increased day by day. The water supply situation was very serious. There was only a single well within the entrenchment and its inadequate supply was a burning problem to meet the need of one thousand people during the hot month of June. The thirst, the hunger, other great difficulties, and the constant pressure of the Indian army, greatly added to the suffocating situation.⁵⁰ General Wheeler, often asked for help from the Governor-General from the Commander-in-chief and also from neighbouring places like Lucknow or Allahabad. But it never came. Then due to complete despondency and being on the brink of complete destruction, General Wheeler was forced⁵¹ to sue for peace and on June 25th General Wheeler raised the white flag⁵² and signalled for his surrender.

English writers, adhere to the version that it was Nana Saheb who initiated the negotiations by sending a messenger, Mr. Jacobi⁵³ to General Wheeler. Thereupon the Nana ordered to stop the firing.

The terms of negotiations were settled. Capt. Moore, Capt. Whiting and Mr. Todd on behalf of the British and Azimullah Khan and Jwala Prasad on behalf of the Nana took part in the deliberations. A note bearing no signatures, but written by Azimullah Khan on behalf of the Nana was given. It read "To the subjects of Her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria—All those

50. Sherer, J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, page 6.

51. Neill's diary—Home Misc. No. 725, Volume III, National Archives—letter of General Neill dated July 5th, 1857 written to Governor-General that—"From the letter of Ranold it appears that Wheeler, after being wounded by a bullet in his leg, became very hopeless and he sued for peace."

52. Tatyá Tope deposed in his statement that "General Wheeler raised the flag of peace and the fighting ceased".
Military Department Proceedings No. 5 of 1859 Consulations, 2nd September, No. 144 National Archives, New Delhi.

53. (a) Thomson, Capt. Mowbray—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 148-149. He says that Mrs. Greenway a member of a wealthy family of Kanpur was the bearer of the note from the Nana to General Wheeler.
(b) Forrest, Sir G.W.—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, page 451. Forrest on the strength of Kalka Prasad's residence says that it was Mr. Jacobs who took the note to Wheeler.

who are not in any way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie and are willing to lay down their arms shall receive a safe passage to Allahabad.''⁵⁴

General Wheeler had no option but to accept the terms, because there was left nothing between death and capitulation for him. The besieged had been there for twenty one days on June 25th.

June 26 was spent in exchange of talks and in settling all the terms and conditions by the representatives of both the sides. The Nana insisted that the besieged garrison must vacate on the darkness of 26th night, but General Wheeler did not agree and hence the capitulation was to take place in the morning of June 27th.

The news of the British capitulation and its evacuation from the besieged garrison spread in Kanpur and in its neighbouring places, like wild fire and many people from far and wide gathered on the banks of the Ganges to witness the scene. The vast gathering there included many rebel sepoys and disgruntled elements.

The Nana entrusted the full arrangements for despatching the garrison to Allahabad to Tatya Tope. The faithful general of the Nana asked Hulas Singh, the city Kotwal to procure sufficient number of boats for that purpose. Hulas Singh thereupon approached the Chaudhari of the boatmen of Sathichaura Ghat, who complied with the wishes and made forty country boats available to him.

The number⁵⁵ of besieged on June 7th was one thousand and one, but at the time of their capitulation their number was reduced to nearly half. When all arrangements were complete and all the evacuees took up their position in the boats, then Tatya Tope, who was watching the whole show with Bala Saheb and Azimullah Khan sent the message to Nana Saheb. Nana Saheb then sent a letter to Sir Wheeler at the Ghat, expressing his satisfaction at the relief,

54. Trevelyan, Rt. Hon'ble Sir George—"Cawnpore" page 167.

55. Trevelyan, Rt. Hon'ble Sir George—*Op. Cit.*—168.

British soldiers—210, Indian band masters—44,

British Officers—100, British civilians—101,

British ladies and children—546 : Total—1001.

which the General obtained. General Wheeler also in return sent a reply of gratitude to the Nana.

Then Tatya Tope waved his hand as a signal for the boats to start and the boatmen started to oar their boats.

Just at that time an accident occurred. Some one amongst the crowd present there sounded a bugle, which caused great confusion there and wave of terror.

Just at that time, a well-directed fire⁵⁶ opened on the boats. This happened when awe prevailed upon the boatmen who were oaring the boats of the evacuees. In the confusion some terrified boatmen jumped into the water and ran towards the shore. A soldier from the boat of Mowbray Thomson, fired at the fleeing boatmen.⁵⁷ That fire from the gun of a white soldier upon Indian boatmen, broke the patience of the rebel soldiers who were standing on the shore, watching the scene. The soldiers of free Kanpur, then could not restrain themselves and in retaliation replied the fire by their own fire on the boats. Mowbray Thomson⁵⁸ writes that when some native boatmen came to us to coxswain us, "we fired into them immediately." Then the bloody scene of killing and murdering the Englishmen started. The boats caught fire. Many women jumped into the water to save their life. Many were drowned, many children were also drowned. In the meantime many Sawars rushed into the water and finished many of the survivors by their swords.

Nana Saheb at that time was residing in the Savada house, when he heard of the happenings, he at once ordered that women and children in no case be slain. And on Peshwa Nana's order the killing and murdering was at once stopped. The survivors were taken out of water and brought to the bank. Their number was about 125. They were mostly women and children. Those

56. Foreign secret consultations, 30th October, 1857. No. 450 (Being copy of a statement by Lt. H.G. Delafosse. late, 53rd B.N. 1. One of the four survivors of the *Garison* at Cawnpore.

57. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 237.

58. Thomson, Capt. Mowbray—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 163-65.

survivors were taken to Savada⁵⁹ Kothi and placed under custody.⁶⁰ The Englishmen, who had survived these were made to stand in a line and were put to death by the sword.

Here the Nana acted as a general. He saved the English women and children on humanitarian ground. Hence he is not at all responsible for the Satichaura Ghat massacre.⁶¹

In the midst of firing and confusion that was going on in Satichaura Ghat, one boat carrying Mowbray Thomson, Dalafosse, Murphy and Sullivan and others, escaped. A long duel of escape and chase followed, throughout that night on the breast of the river water. That boat was attacked by Babu Ram Baksh a powerful taluqdar of the locality on the way but the boat somehow managed its escape and floated further. By that time all the occupants of the boat except the four, died on the way in their struggle. Raja Digvijay Singh of the locality gave asylum and protection to the four survivors, namely Mowbray Thomson, Delafosse, Murphy and Sullivan. After receiving complete rest and treatment, the four survivors after one month went to Allahabad safe and sound.

General Wheeler, Lady Wheeler, his son Lieutenant G.R. Wheeler and his one unmarried daughter died there. His younger daughter Miss Wheeler, while trying to swim to the shore, was taken away by a sawar of the 2nd Cavalry by the name Nizam Ali. She was traced but was never found.

The Nana was then the complete master of the situation. British rule was annihilated and the nationalist forces under the

59. Kaye, Sir John William, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 342.

60. Sherer, J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, page 8.

61. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 282.

It is not easy to blame the Nana for this. Dr. Sen writes that "as the head of the rebel army, the Nana cannot be absolved from all responsibilities, and technically all blame for the massacre must be assigned to him." But John Lang doubted about this. Colonel Maude writing thirty-seven years later also felt doubtful about the Nana's part in this terrible crime. Nana Saheb, himself in his Ish-taharnama emphatically denied the charge and said that he had no hand in the massacre. Savarkar writes that the Nana did not order to kill women and children.

command and rule of the Nana was established. The lost spirit and the ancient glory of Indian chivalry appeared to revive and the rule of the Indians by the Indians and for the Indians was re-established.

The Nana then took up the taste of organising the country and establishing peace and order in the society. He had to give security to all, he had to infuse the sense of confidence and dignity amongst all. He had to show from his acts and deeds that Indian way of living was far superior to that of the British. Nana had to exert all his energies to prove his worth and status.

The Nana's accession and administration

The Nana was acclaimed as Peshwa on June 27, 1857, and on the same evening all the Indian Troops were paraded for a general review by Nana Saheb, as the head of the State. The Indian troops were composed of native Infantry and cavalry mutineers of Kanpur, Lucknow, Azamgarh, Nowgang and troops from many other places, who had joined the Indian forces at Kanpur after the break out of the revolt.

Kanpur had been cleared off all the Europeans. On June 28, in the afternoon a grand darbar was held in honour of Peshwa Nana Soheb.⁶² They all assembled on the plain of Savada on the north of the vacated entrenchment. Three salutes were fired, one of 21 guns for Nana Saheb, as the sovereign of the state, 17 gun fires were fired in honour for Rao Saheb and Bala Saheb. For the commanders Tatya Tope, Tika Singh and Jwala Prasad 11 gun fires were shot as a mark of respect to them. After the necessary formalities were observed, a big procession was taken out in the city the same evening. Nana Saheb rode in his richly decorated elephant and presented a royal view to the spectators. A large number of revolutionaries witnessed the scene.

June 30th was fixed as the auspicious day for the accession of Nana Saheb as Peshwa. It was also decided that accession was to take place at the royal mansion of the Nana at Bithoor.⁶³

62. Freedom struggle in U.P., Volume VI, page 367.

(Publication Bureau, U.P. Government, Lucknow 1957-61).

63. Godsey, Vishnu Bhatt—'Mangha Pravas'—(Poona—1907) Page 39.

So, the Nana left for Bithoor that day and placed Kanpur under the charge of Baba Bhatt, Jwala Prasad, Azimullah and Munshi Shah Ali.

At 5 O'clock in the evening of June 30, the ceremony of installation was performed at the residential palace of the Nana at Bithoor and in name and fact he became Peshwa. What Baji-Rao II could not do in his life time, the Nana achieved the same by the sword.

Azimullah Khan's diary states that a procession with great pomp and show was taken out at Bithoor and the temples on the Ghats of the Ganges were decorated with flowers, illuminations. These celebrations continued for six days. The Nana observed his accession ceremony on the traditional lines of the Peshwas. His soldiers, both Hindus and Muslims, took active part in the procession. The trumpets, beguls, drums and other instruments sounded loudly the victory of the Peshwa and the defeat of the British. Bala Saheb and Rao Saheb were on the backs of the elephants.

While Nana Saheb was at Bithoor, Baba Bhatt administered Kanpur, but the absence of the Peshwa encouraged certain intrigues. It so happened that Baba Bhatt chopped off the hands of a muslim butcher for the crime of slaughtering a cow. The feeling of the Hindus was much injured by the incidents. The Muslims equally became furious at the punishment given to the butcher. This made the atmosphere of the city full of suspicion and hatred against each other.

There was also some general dissatisfaction for non-distribution of the promised rewards of pay by Nana Saheb. Some Muslims, taking advantage of the absence of the Nana tried to install Nanhe Nawab as ruler of Kanpur. Nanhe Nawab was one of the sons of Motuniaddaula, Agha Mir, who was the minister of Oudh upto 1830. He came down to Kanpur and settled there. On his death in 1833, his heirs received the pension from the East India Company and Nanhe Nawab whose name was Mohammad Ali Khan lived in his father's mansion at Kanpur. He was held in high esteem by the muslim population of the city. Nanhe Nawab

took active part in the battle against the British and himself directed and commanded one of the batteries firing at the British in the entrenchment. Nana Saheb was happy with him for his valuable services.

On hearing of those disturbing news Peshwa, Nana Saheb returned from Bithoor to Kanpur on July 6, and managed the whole affairs amicably and satisfactorily to both the parties. Nanhe Nawab was not keen for power, and so he was left where he was.

Nana Saheb took up his residence in Noor Mohammad's hotel near the place now known as Phoolbagh. The building of Bibighar was near at hand. He appointed many influential muslims to responsible posts and gave them their share in the administration and thereby won back their confidence.

The power vacuum had to be filled with speed and efficiency and the Nana took up the matter in his own hand and began to set the things in the right direction.

There was great disorder and a semi-state of lawlessness. It was quite difficult to keep the large body of 20,000 troops of all sorts under strict control and order. On the pretext of searching the remaining and hiding Englishmen many rebel sepoys searched the houses of the rich and took away the valuables from their houses. This process became a common feature and the inhabitants of Kanpur, both rich and poor felt sore and insecure. So much so that they even feared their lives and property. The uncontrollable army had to be managed and brought to books and to an orderly manner.

The deserted bungalows of the British officers and civilians were looted and destroyed. Many Englishmen who were traced out from their buildings, were put to death. Many Bengwali persons,⁶⁴ who were in the service of the British were also subjected to great torture and misery. Their houses were searched on the pretext of searching the remaining Englishmen there. Thus, there prevailed a great panic amongst the civil population as well.

64. The Hindoo Patriot, 25th June, 1857. p. 203 (National Library, Calcutta).

Kanpur and its neighbouring villages were also in a disturbed condition. Law and order became very loose and looting and highway robbery became a common feature there.

So, the Nana had to exert all his nerves in restoring peace, calm and security.

The administration of the district was in the hands of Baba Bhatt, the elder brother of Nana Saheb. Azimullah Khan was entrusted with the charge of collecting the revenue and Jwala Prasad and Ram Lal acted as his deputies. Bala Saheb was placed in-charge of finance. His main task was to manage and distribute the pay and other items of expenditure. Peshwa, Nana Saheb, was at the helm of affairs and was the head of the state. All administration was carried in the name of the Peshwa. Tatya Tope was his chief advisor and helper. He used to shoulder the major responsibilities. Chandika Prasad was the chief secretary of the central secretariat.

The Nana organised his army just on the same pattern as the British. He did his best to infuse complete discipline sense of duty and patriotism amongst his Infantry and Cavalry, organised on separate footing, each regiment under the command of one commanding officer. The rank and file of the army were on the same pattern as in the British army. The Nana paid special care of collecting arms, ammunitions, and gun-powder. He maintained the regular flow of food, civil and ammunition supply to the army. Tatya Tope was asked to organise the army⁶⁵ very efficiently. There was the provision of court-martial, and any soldier found guilty was courtmartialed and was punished according to the nature of his crime. The ranks of the army right from Sepoys to the General, were the same as in the British army.

There was regular influx of rebel soldiers from many parts of the country to Kanpur and it was indispensable to organise them, lest they should become jobless. So, the Nana entrusted the task of organising all the incoming soldiers to Jwala Prasad who was

65. Proclamation proposing the organisation of troops issued on 6th July, 1857.

Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. VI, p. 605.

given the rank of a Brigadier. Dalgengan Singh and Ganga Deen were made Colonels and they were to help Jwala Prasad in his task.

The Nana took special care of maintaining peace and order. At first he appointed Quzi Bassiuddin as Kotwal. But when he was not found suitable, Hulas Singh was given the charge of the Kotwal of the city. Hulas Singh was an experienced man, who had held that post in British rule.

For justice, peace and security the Nana organised his justice department. Baba Bhatt was in the charge of judicial administration. The civil and the criminal courts were organised and rules and regulations were framed for their administration. Service punishment was awarded to offenders and wrong doers. Bad characters were soon handed up to be paraded on donkeys throughout the city. The hands of the thieves were cut off for the offence of plunder. The killing of a cow was also a severe offence.⁶⁶

The general administration was run on very efficiently. Baba Bhatt was also in-charge of general administration as well. Those former Company's servants who had good experiences of their departments were re-employed. Ram Lal was Deputy Collector. He very ably handled the situation, and put everything in order.

The revenue was also collected in an organised way. The old Tahsildars who offered to serve under the Nana were re-employed and fresh and able persons were also appointed. The revenue officers were asked to collect full revenue. They were further asked to find out the property of the British officials, which was looted by civilians. An order was issued to all to deposit in the treasury, the whole property money and jewellery left by the British officials otherwise the guilty would be punished very severely. Many houses were searched and much of the booty was recovered. The following is the list⁶⁷ that contains the names, the post held and the place of postings :—

66. "Proclamation issued by Nana on July 6th," preserved National Archives New Delhi.

Reproduced in "Freedom Struggle in U.P." Vol. VI, Page 608.

67. Kanpur Gazetteer—p. 201—2.

<i>Tahsildars</i>	<i>Places</i>
(1) Shah Ali Husain	Jajmaon
(2) Maharaj Baksha	Sar-Salampur
(3) Laxman Prasad	Akbarpur
(4) Faraduzma	Rasulabad
(5) Azimuddin	Sakandra
(6) Muhammad Nazar Khan	Bilhor
(7) Ahamudullaha	Bithoor
(8) Akbar Ali	Akbarpur

According to Kanpur Gazetteer, the following is the list of the officers employed in the general administration by Peshwa Nana.

Abha Dhanurdhari	Bakshi
Shah Ali	Secret service officer
Mulchand Chaudhari	Food and Civil Supplies
Shiv Charan	Jail Daroga
Bilas Rai	Sirshtadar
Lal Chand Kayasta	Robkari Nabis
Gurusahab Kaysta	Wasul-Baki-Nabis
Bhagwan Deen Kayasta	Jama-Kharcha Nabis
Tulsiram Kayasta	Siyah Nabis
Laxman Prasad Kayasta	Abkari Daroga
Muhammad Habib	Muharrir
Rahim Baksha	„
Gulam Rasul	„

The rule of the Nana prevailed at all places where the rebellion took place. Kanpur, and beyond were his domains. All the rebel leaders looked upon Nana as their supreme, and requested his help in the hour of their need.

The mutineers of Fatehpur declared the Nana as their Peshwa and head. The Nana in his reply to the letters of Raghunath Singh and Bhawani Singh of Setapur, asked them to fire cannon shots as a mark of happiness on the establishment of independent

Kanpur.⁶⁸ Many parts of North Western provinces also acknowledged the Nana as their leader and ruler.

Though Oudh rallied round the Nawab, the real sovereignty of the Nana was acknowledged there as well. In his letter of July 7th to the rebel leaders of Oudh, the Nana wrote "As much as you need, you can have the cannons and gun powder. Sharfuddin and Ali Raza Beg, the Kotwal of Lucknow have been ordered to supply them to you."⁶⁹ The Nana was very closely associated with the defence of Oudh. He had written in reply to Taluqdar Raoraja Rambaksha Singh of Doundia Khare that "In your letter of June 29th, I received the information of the massacre of the English people and the death of your brother Sudhanan Singh and your two other officers in the battle field. You have requested my help in lieu of the service you rendered. You are hereby informed, that I am also very much in pains at your sorrows. All have to bow down their heads before God. Your brother laid his life for the sake and service of the government, so my helping hand shall always be on you."⁷⁰ The spirit of the letter clearly shows that all the Taluqdars, Rajas and Zamindars looked upon Nana as their ruler and benefactor.

Banda, the hot bed of rebellion, also acknowledged the Nana as their ruler. Banda rebelled on June 14th, 1857. Nawab Ali Bahadur in whose veins the blood of the former peshwas was flowing, rose up in arms against the British and declared that "his aim was to strengthen the bonds of unity and friendship with Nana, to send a wise man as Vakil to Kanpur, and to exchange letters with other leaders of mutiny only through Nana, and not to do any important work without the sane advice of Nana."⁷¹ The Nawab presented twenty-one gold coins to the Nana on the occasion of his accession as Peshwa.

68. Letter from Nana to Raghunath Singh, "Freedom struggle in U.P." Vol. IV, page 601.

69. Nana's message to officers of army, July 7th, 1857. Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. IV, page 608-9.

70. Nana's letter to Ram Baksha Singh, Taluqdar of Dondia Khara, July 3rd, 1857. Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. IV, page 603.

71. Nawab Ali Bahadur's letter to Nana Saheb. Freedom struggle in U.P., Vol. IV, page 615.

Karbi, an adjoining territory of Banda, was the place of habitation of the descendants of Amrit Rao, the adopted son of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II. His descendants Narayana Rao and Madhav Rao, were living there. When they heard the news of the freedom movement of Kanpur under the Nana, they raised their standard in rebellion against the British. They helped the Nawab of Banda by offering him rupees one lakh to raise his army. Both the brothers, accepted the Nana as Peshwa, and began to rule the land and collect the revenue in his name.

Bundelkhand also rose in arms against the British. Many of the Maharastra families had come to Bundelkhand, and had settled there permanently. They considered the Peshwa to be their sovereign. Even after the defeat of the Peshwa by the British, those families had sympathy and warm feelings for the Peshwas. When the news of the Nana's assuming Peshwaship at Kanpur reached there they all became very happy and they also revolted against the British and looked upon the Nana as their Peshwa. Places like Jalon, Damoh, Sagar, Chandar were the centres of the rising and in the name of the Nana they declared their independence. Thus, Bundelkhand was also within the sphere of influence and domain of Peshwa Nana Saheb.

Jhansi was also subjected to British imperialism. The Nana and Rani Laxmi Bai, whom the Nana accepted as sister had personal and political relations. When Laxmi Bai rebelled against the British rule, the Nana extended all help to her, and his armies at Kalpi and Gwalior fought the British alongwith the army of Jhansi. Thus, the Nana's sway was also established over Jhansi, and there also he was known as the Peshwa of the people.

Gwalior was under the rule of Jayaji Rao Sindhia, who was once under the vassalage of the Peshwa. So, the reminiscences of Peshwaship were very deep there and people in their hearts were very much sympathetic and loyal to the Peshwas. When the news of the assumption of Peshwaship by the Nana reached there the inhabitants of Gwalior became very happy and extended every help to him. The Gwalior army sided with Tatya Tope and welcomed the Nana as their Peshwa. When the Nana's army attacked Gwalior, the Gwalior army refused the orders of their king Jayaji

Rao Sindhia, to fire upon the army of Nana, and instead joined him. The soldiers retorted to Jayaji Sindhia, that the Nana Peshwa was their master and his master too.⁷² This desire of the army shows that they all acknowledged the Nana as their Peshwa, in the same spirit, as they had once acknowledged the Peshwa as their masters.

The Deccan, also looked upon the Nana for the revival of Peshwaship and for the emancipation of the Deccan from the clutches of the British. Rango Ji Bappu had already taken the responsibility of organising the freedom movement in the Deccan. He infused the feeling of independence and liberty amongst the masses. The Nana had also sent many emissaries and agents there to spread the message of patriotism and independence to every house and to every person. The Nana's proclamation reached to the Deccan state of Nargund, and asked the people of the Deccan to come forward for the cause of the nation. In one of the famous Maratha papers of that time, a news was printed and circulated amongst the people that the Nana would come to Poona in person to assume the Peshwaship of the Deccan on Dashera festival. This news filled the people of the south with enthusiasm and they eagerly waited for the arrival of the messenger of peace, liberty and patriotism to their place. Though the Deccan remained calm, as a whole, there were stray cases of revolts here and there against the yoke of the British and in acknowledgement of the Nana as their Peshwa.⁷³

Thus, over all, it is quite evident that the Nana was the Peshwa of his people and the de-facto leader of the rebels, throughout. It is also a fact that all the Rajputs, particularly the Chauhans, Gaurs, Chandolas, Panwars and Gautams joined the Nana in the rising.⁷⁴ Thus, in Rajputana, and in central India in particular, and in eastern India and in the south in general, the spirit and voice of the Nana prevailed, which laid the foundation and sowed the seeds of liberty, nationalism and independence in India.

72. Godsey, Bishnu Bhatt—*Op. Cit.*, page 116.

73. Source Material of Freedom Movement in India, Bombay Govt. Records, Vol. Ist, page 243-44.

74. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*—page 254.

The Nana's administration was based on general welfare and for the benefit of both the Hindus and the Muslims. It had its own maxims, principles and ideology, based on Orientalism. It encircled within its orbit, the civil, military, social, religious, ethical and moral aspects of the life and society. It was based on pro-national feelings and it also elaborated the anti-British feeling in order to clear the soil of the land from the influences of the foreigners.⁷⁵ His administration was benevolent and liberal.

The British army's march towards Kanpur. By that time the land and the territory between Delhi and Calcutta was in full rebellion and the British rule was replaced by Indian administration. But the Madras and the Bombay presidencies remained loyal to the British and the Governor-General had the satisfaction to have his foothold in India. He deployed the armies from Madras, Bombay and Punjab to suppress the rebellion in the plains of the Indo-Gangetic plain, and to re-establish the British rule there. Lord Canning the Governor-General of India despatched Colonel Neill from Calcutta. He was summoned from Madras for that very purpose.

On June 30, 1857, Neill was able to despatch a column of 400 Europeans, 300 Sikhs, and 120 irregulars with two guns to Kanpur under the Command of Major Renaud with the instructions "To punish and destroy all guilty villages along the route to Fatehpur."

On July 7th, Brigadier-General Havelock followed Maj. Renaud to Kanpur, and Havelock followed his track, he found "The country side deserted, supplies unprocurable and corpses hanging from every tree."⁷⁶ The two armies joined each other near Fatehpur on July 12, 1857, and marched under the command of Havelock. The armies of Renaud and Havelock committed great atrocities on their way. Sir Charles Dike had described the horrible scenes in very pathetic words. He said that villages after villages were cruelly set on fire and the innocent villagers

75. Source Material for the history of Freedom Movement in India. Bombay Govt. Records. Vol. 1st, page 255-256.

76. Allahabad Gazetteer—page 185.

were mercilessly killed. Sir Charles recorded those scenes regretfully and with utmost shame.

When Nana, the Peshwa, learnt of the arrival of the adversary forces, he at once sent Brigadier Jwala Prasad to check the British advance. On July 12, the two opposing armies met one another, but the experience of the British General Havelock prevailed and the nationalist forces suffered a heavy setback. Fatehpur fell into enemy hands. Havelock allowed his men to plunder and sack the town and the British soldiers mercilessly did the job. Jwala Prasad with the aid of fresh re-inforcement tried unsuccessfully to check the advance of the British in Aung and near Pandu Nadi. This encounter took place on July 15, 1857. The British forces gained success and the British advance remained unchecked and soon Havelock reached the neighbourhood of Kanpur. Nana Saheb had to wage a war of life and death with the British.

On July 16, when it became apparent that the British army would attack Kanpur, the Nana called his war council and assigned the task of fortification and defence of Kanpur to his trusted lieutenants. After making all preliminary arrangement the Nana at the head of his strong contingent of 5000 men, set out to meet the enemy. He arranged his army in battle position near the village of Ahirwan, which was to the south of Kanpur near the junction of the Grand Trunk Road and the road to Kanpur.⁷⁷

The armies engaged themselves in a fierce encounter, both sides suffered heavily, but the outcome was indecisive. The nationalist army had to take shelter in a wooded village on the Kanpur Road and took a defensive position. The centre of the Nana's army fought a hand-to hand struggle only to fall back to a defensive position. Here also a vigorous combat between the two armies occurred, and the nationalist forces retreated towards Kanpur. The day did not prove good to them.

The Nana then entrenched himself on the road to the Kanpur Cantonment, and he "threw all his individual energies into the work

77. Malleson, Col. G.B.—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, page 489.

78. Kaye, Sir John William—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 379-80.

before him and tried what personal encouragement could do to stimulate his troops."⁷⁸ The Nana did not lose heart and personally looked into minute details of the war and infused a 'do or die' feeling in his soldiers. "He was seen riding about amongst his soldiers, the band and the buglers striking up as he approached. The greatest animation pervaded the enemy ranks."⁷⁹ At that place the Nana delivered a very strong attack and the British army was obliged to halt its march. But when the night was about to fall, the British army attacked the exhausted Indian troops and gave them a crushing defeat.

Now the Nana had realised that he had lost the front and Kanpur both, so he started making his further defence. The Nana was then on the defensive side. On next morning, July 17, Havelock advanced with his victorious army to occupy the station, which was in the hands of the Nana's army. The Cantonment was very near, when a terrific explosion, like an earthquake shook everybody. The Nana's small body of horsemen had blown up the magazine, which was completely burnt down.

Havelock re-occupied Kanpur on July 17, 1857. The Nana did not find Kanpur as a safe refuge, for he well knew that authority forgets the dying King. So, he with his trusted and chosen lieutenants, at once started for Bithoor. On the very day *i. e.* the July 17, 1857, the Nana was seen galloping towards Bithoor. On reaching there at his palace Nana collected whatever treasure, diamonds, precious stones and relics of the Peshwas remained and tied them all in a shawl. Amongst those was a torn cloth of Guru Ram Das, which the great saint had presented to Shivaji. That used to be kept in a sandal-wood box in the temple, and was daily worshiped. The household jewellery was also collected. The Nana threw the other articles of gold and silver and other valuables inside the well of his enclosure, and then taking all his family with him in that thick of darkness he set out for the shore of the Ganges. He reached Patkapur village Ghat alongwith his retinue to embark on one large boat to cross the sacred Ganges for reaching the territory of Oudh.

79. Marshman, J.C.—"Memoirs of Sir Henry Havelock", page 310.

Thousands of people were assembled on the Ghat to give last farewell to the family of the Peshwas whom they revered and respected so much. With tears in their eyes, and hearts filled with sorrow, the inhabitants of Bithoor saw the last of the Peshwas depart from them, for no other cause than the cause for the independence of the nation.

The party in the boat consisted of Nana Saheb, Rao Saheb, Bala Saheb, the families of these persons, and the widow of the late Baji Rao II and his unmarried daughter.⁸⁰ The Nana then asked the boatmen to go back and after their departure, Rao Saheb and Bala Saheb and he himself began to oar the boat.

When the boat reached the mid-stream the Nana extinguished the light of the boat, and the people on the shore thought that he had been drowned. But it was a very crafty device of the Nana, to beguile the inhabitants and the British as well. His main aim was to conceal his whereabouts, so that the British could not pursue him, and he would find sufficient time to make arrangements for his safety.

While the boat was in midstream, Nana threw inside the water many precious stones and jewellery, which he could not take with him, the torn cloth of Sri Ram Dass and the crimson flag of the Peshwas, as his last sacrificial presents to mother Ganges. The sight was pathetic, yet inevitable.⁸¹

After long the Nana managed the boat to the shore of the Ganges and then the party disembarked after great difficulty. They had to walk on foot to cross the sandy bank and to come to dry land. The party had not taken any food nor taken water. As soon as the sun began to shine on the sky, the Nana and his party were on the soil of Oudh. Just at that time a village Mamladar came to the Nana and offered his services to him. He also conveyed the news that the Begum of Oudh had asked him to offer all help to him and look to his comforts. The Nana accompanied him and reached the village known as Fatehpur Chaurasia.

80. Sherer, J.W.,—*Op. Cit.*, page 4.

81. Godsey, Bishnu Bhatt—*Op. Cit.*, page 31.

Bhupal Singh was the Taluqdar of that Gaon of Fatehpur-Chaurasia. The Nana stayed there with comfort and honour.

The Massacre of Bibighar. The British forces knocked at the doors of Kanpur on July 15, 1857. On the afternoon of the same day the Nana held a close meeting with his advisers and associates and after a long consultation, it was decided to meet the challenge and to do away with Bibighar.

The Kanpur Gazetteer says that "The helpless captives in the Bibighar were being foully murdered at the Nana's order."

Bibighar was a building situated in old cantonment. It was a single storeyed building constructed in Indian style with a courtyard in the middle. The courtyard was about six yards long. It had two rooms facing each other in both sides measuring 20' long and 16' wide. The surviving women and children of the (June 27th) Satichaura massacre, were lodged in this building. The number of the prisoners was estimated round about 200.

Neill and Havelock's atrocities and cruelties had already reached Kanpur and the heart of every one was filled with dismay and consternation. The feeling of revenge was also there. So, it was suggested that the military guards on duty were required to finish the prisoners, but they declined to do that.

The task of looking after the women and children was entrusted to one 'Begum' Hussain Khatun. She had been brought up in the house of Peshwa Baji Rao II and she was living since then in the enclosure of the Peshwa's palace. She was dead enemy of the British. When the Guards declined to do away with the prisoners she brought five or six men to kill the inmates. They entered the building on the night of July 15, and killed all inmates by their swords. The next morning, all the corpses were thrown into the well within the compound of the building.

A great deal has been written by contemporary British writers about the massacre of Bibighar and all have in greater or lesser degree blamed the Nana for it.

But, the Nana never committed the crime⁸² within his knowledge. It is just possible that 'Begum' Husain Khatun knowing that the British would return, inflicted her vengeance upon the prisoners, by managing to have them killed by her men in the name of the Nana.

Muhammad Ali, before ascending to gallows had confessed in front of Frobeal Michal that Bibighar massacre was committed by a woman and not by the Nana. So was the statement of Jwala Prasad, who also said that the Nana was in no way responsible for the massacre of Bibighar.

The version of the British authors rests mainly upon the accounts that were deposed by the witnesses after the restoration of the British authority in Kanpur. Lieutenant Colonel G.W. Williams, Military Secretary and Commissioner of Police, North Western Provinces conducted the enquiry and asked as many as 63 Hindus, Muslims and Christian witnesses connected with Bibighar murder case. Nanak Chand had also given the account of the happening of Kanpur of that time.

The matter of evidence regarding Bibighar massacre unfortunately comes down to us through the British pen or the official records prepared and preserved by the British. They were the victors and the Nana was vanquished. Therefore, the official records were full of prejudices and were coloured to suit the interest and viewpoints of the government which wanted the Nana to be blamed for that act. They defamed the Nana as culprit. But this cannot be relied upon, for the British were the deadly enemy of the Nana, and they were all out to blame him in one way or the other.

Moreover, it should be kept in mind that it was the time of war, a war between the Nana representing the nationalists and the British, the foreigners. And in that war everything was justified to achieve the end. If the British claim to be not guilty for their numberless heinous cruel murderous crimes committed by them since the days of Lord Clive to the days of Lord Dalhousie, then on which principle or law can they blame the Nana to be guilty,

82. Foreign Political consultations No. 65, dated 27th, May 1859.

when he was fighting for the cause of his nation ? If victory had made the British wise and on the right side, then certainly history would have been otherwise, if the Nana would have been victorious.

Isolated actions are insignificant in the context of national upheavals. The Nana's actions at Satichaura Ghat and Bibighar cannot be condemned on the evidence based on British writers, who were either servants of the Company or military officers. Their view-points were anti-Nana and anti-Indians. They were fighting to rule the country and not to project the image of the heroes of the country. The achievements of Nana Saheb are to be examined from the National point of view and not from the point of view of an individual. The account of Howard Russel⁸³ throws some light on the angle of vision, the Britisher thought about India, when he wrote about Kanpur happenings done by Nana Saheb that "The main reason to exaggerate the importance of the massacre of Kanpur was that those acts were done by a black-race, a slave race. These people dared to shed the blood of helpless and innocent women and children of their masters..."

Sir John Raye demonstrated another mentality of the British when he observed that "what is dreadful in the record of retribution, is that some of our people regarded it not as a solemn duty or a terrible necessity, but as a deirlish pastime, striking indiscriminately at the black race and slaying without proof of individual guilt."⁸⁴

When that sort of mentality existed with the British way of thinking, what sense of justice or duty and of responsibility could be expected from the British.

This is why it is a plain fact that the British writers and masters looked the affairs of that time from their own interest and satisfying their sense of superiority. So, the Nana cannot be blamed for these massacres, since whatever he did was not done for himself but for his nation. He was justified and on the right side.

83. Russell, Howard 'My Diary in India during the years 1858-59', p. 29.

84. Kaye, Sir John William—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, page 403,

Bithoor attacked and sacked. After his successful expedition of Kanpur, General Havelock sent Major Stevenson, with a strong detachment to occupy Bithoor on July 19, 1857. The British force reached there without any formidable opposition and Bithoor once again fell into the hands of the British. The Nana had already abandoned the place. The palace of the Nana was soon plundered and destroyed by setting it on fire and by bombardment. The whole city of Bithoor was plundered by the British who committed all sorts of atrocities.⁸⁵ His (Nana's) palace was laid low, his mosque blown up so completely that there was literally not one stone left there.⁸⁶

The British victorious armies, full of revenge and anger, showered their vengeance upon Bithoor to deface all memory of the Nana there. Major Stevenson after completing his military campaign and "after destroying the Nana's palace, and taking some abandoned guns,"⁸⁷ returned to Kanpur. On returning from Sarai Ghat, Hope Grant marched to Bithoor on December 11, 1857 blowing up the temple and burning the palace, at the same time recovering a large amount of treasure concealed by the Nana."⁸⁸

The palace was partly destroyed on July 19, and the work of destruction was completed on December 11, by Hope Grant. The slaughter and loot of Bithoor continued for three days. All such buildings connected with the name of Peshwa, Nana Saheb, were razed to the ground. A glass-temple of the Peshwa, that was situated on the bank of the Ganga near Maharaj Ghat was also destroyed. The marble temple of Sarsweteshwar built by Baji Rao II was also partly destroyed. The inlaid precious stones were taken away and its beauty was marred to a very great extent.

The mansion of Tatya Tope was also burnt down. In short "The British tried to obliterate the name of Nana Saheb by destroying everything pertaining to him or to his adoptive father Baji Rao.. Twice at least a British Government steamer made its appearance.

85. Sir, Dr. S.N.—*Op Cit.*, page 233

86. Jones, Capt. O.J. *Recollections of a Winter campaign in India in 1857-58.*" (London—1859) pp. 50-51.

87. Kanpur Gazetteer—page 217.

88. *Ibid.* page 221.

on the Ganga and opened fire on the buildings on the banks. The signs of the shots can still be seen.⁸⁹

That was the period of murder and loot. Any black man associated with the Nana, was indiscriminately shot down. To the British every Indian inhabitant of Bithoor was a rebel and so all were plundered, sacked and molested.⁹⁰ Even the Dewan of the Nana, Subadar Narayana Rao allied himself with the British and participated in the loot of Bithoor. He had taken away many valuables from the palace of Nana.

In this way thousands of people were killed. The British soldiers plundered their houses for gold, silver and ornaments. They also plundered the castle of the Nana. They entered the houses of Bithoor and snatched away utensils of copper and of other metals, and after that they set the buildings on fire. They destroyed the temples and all the orchards and gardens there.⁹¹

Kanpur presented no better scene than Bithoor. On July 20, Brigadier Naill arrived in Kanpur to assist General Havelock in his war operations by the order of the supreme Commander-in-chief, then he also committed all acts of cruelty, murders, looting and mass annihilation in Kanpur and near about its suburbs. Neill in his letter exhibited his feeling of revenge that he wanted to inflict on the Indians, exemplary punishment and great humiliation.⁹²

General Havelock was much anxious to relieve and help Lucknow from the hands of the rebels. So, after making his necessary arrangements at Kanpur, he entrusted the full responsibility on Neill and himself set out for Lucknow on July 25, 1857. On July 26 he encamped at the village of Mangalwar six miles on the Kanpur-Lucknow road.

Nana at Fatehpur-Chaurasi. The Nana had crossed with his family members the Ganga on July 18, 1857 and was living with

89. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 298.

90. Kaye and Malleeson "History of Indian Mutiny" Vol. II, page 290.

91. Godsey, Bishanu Bhatt—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 41-42.

92. Kaye and Malleeson—*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, page 299.

Bhopal Singh in his fortress. Narpat Singh, the Taluqdar of Ruiya, whose father Jasm Singh had laid down his life while fighting on the side of the Nana against the British at Kanpur, was also with the Nana there. He extended all help and services to the Nana in the hour of his need.

Fatehpur-Chaurasi had its strategic importance. It was about 12 to 13 miles from Bithoor, situated near the Lucknow-Kanpur road. A close watch could be kept on all the movements of the British army to and from Lucknow and Kanpur, and hence a defensive and offensive position could be taken up there whenever the occasion arose. The Nana, therefore, decided to make Fatehpur-Chaurasi as his head quarter for military reasons.

The Nana sent his messenger to Begum Hasrat Mahal, and expressed his desire to come to Lucknow. The Begum readily accepted his wishes and at once sent Raja Jailal Singh, her chief officer, along with twelve camels, some forty carts, 20 to 25 elephants to fetch the Nana and his party with comfort and honour.

At Lucknow Nasrat Jang came to welcome the Nana with 200 sawars, two elephants fitted with silver hawdah and several camels. He was given a grand ceremonial welcome and was lodged in Sheesh Mahal the luxurious residence of the former Nawabs of Oudh.

As representative of Begum, Mir Wasid Ali greeted the Nana, who presented to Mir Wasid Ali a costly shawl and one handkerchief. On behalf of the Begum, Wasid Ali presented to the Nana, a golden embroidered garment, a valuable sword, a diamond necklace, a Mala of pearls, a shawl, a handkerchief, an overcoat, one horse and one elephant, both with silver hawdah fitted on them.

The Nana's visit to Lucknow was in the third week of August, 1857. At length he discussed the whole situation with the Begum and both thought out ways and means to fight the war of independence against the British. The Nana also had a long consultation on the future course of action and greatly emphasised the need to have greater unity between themselves. After full

consultations and complete understanding the Nana returned to Fatehpur-Chaurasi. It was believed that he was given the leadership of the rebels of Oudh and he took the responsibility upon himself gladly. 'The Hindu Patriot', dated August 13, 1857 wrote "..... we believe that Nana heads the rebels of Oudh..."

At Fatehpur-Chaurasi, he was busy organising his forces and consolidating his position. After the set backs of Kanpur, many rebel soldiers disarrayed themselves to find shelter wherever they could, but now the Nana began to organise them, and did his best to boost their morale. He also managed to procure cannons and gun powder.

The Nana established his supreme command at Fatehpur-Chaurasi and deputed Tatya Tope to Kalpi to organise and consolidate the forces of liberty and nationalism and to give a tough resistance to the British from all sides. The Nana had also the great responsibility of supervising the nationalist forces at Lucknow, and also to prevent the British forces from advancing towards Lucknow.

He checkmated the British forces on Kanpur-Lucknow road, and did not allow them to proceed to Lucknow. That indirectly helped the nationalist forces to wage their war, across the Ganga, at Fatehpur-Chaurasi. He concentrated his forces, across the Yamuna at Kalpi. Tatya Tope was strengthening his forces to deliver combined attack on Kanpur. The Nana entrusted the task of the re-conquest of Kanpur and Bithoor to Tatya Tope and himself remained at Fatehpur-Chaurasi to help and encourage the insurgents of Lucknow.

Tatya Tope was appointed General by Nana Saheb. As the field of operation was very extensive and many sided, and since the Nana could not mobilise his forces against the British. So, Rao Saheb, and Bala Saheb helped Tatya Tope as representatives of the Nana. Tatya Tope was a personal adherent of the Nana and was bound to his person by ties of loyalty and gratitude.⁹³ So, whatever Tatya did was in the name of and for Peshwa, Nana Saheb.

93. Sen, Dr, S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 231.

Bithoor re-occupied and lost. Bithoor had been the place of the Nana's abode, and hence associated with the great name of Peshwas. When General Havelock left Kanpur on July 25, 1857, to help and relieve Lucknow, Tatya Tope mobilised all his nationalist forces and re-occupied Bithoor and entrenched himself strongly there. Tatya Tope then sent out his soldiers to the suburbs of Kanpur to attack the British Garrison at night. Brigadier Neill was in command of Kanpur at that time, when he sensed that the forces of the Nationalist would pose danger to him, he informed Havelock on August 11, "4000 men and five guns have assembled today at Bithoor and threaten Kanpur. I cannot stand this, they will enter the town and our communications are gone, if I am not supported, I can only hold out here, can do nothing beyond our entrenchments. All the country between this place and Allahabad will be up and our power and communication shall be held up on the way if the steamer as I feel assured, does not start, it will fall into the hands of the enemy, and we will be in a bad way."⁹⁴

After receiving that letter Havelock, realising the danger hurriedly re-crossed the Ganga and came back to Kanpur. On August 16, Havelock marched upon Bithoor with a strong force. Tatya Tope also arranged his army for the battle. The Nana had personally come to encourage his forces there and his presence greatly filled the hearts of his sepoys with enthusiasm. Sherer has stated that "Bithoor was defended by several regiments of mutinous sepoys, including cavalry and artillery. They had thrown up entrenchments with some skill."⁹⁵ The battle was fought throughout the day and the Nana and Tatya Tope gave resistance at every step. There was artillery duel, there was hand-to-hand fight, there was hand struggle, but at last sepoy valour yielded to superior leadership of the British.

The British troops bivouacked that night at Bithoor, returned to Kanpur the next day.⁹⁶

94. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 207.

95. Sherer, J.W.—*Op. Cit.*, pp. 189-90. Footnote.

96. *Ibid.*, page 189. Footnote.

After the defeat at Bithoor⁹⁷, a part of Tatya Tope's troops went in the direction of Fatehgarh and a part to Sheorajpur, about twelve miles from Kanpur on the Grand Trunk Road. Nana Saheb, remained entrenched at Fatehpur-Chaurasi to materialise his plans and checkmate the British advance on Lucknow.

It must be said to the credit of the Nana, that he organised and deployed his forces on Kanpur-Lucknow road in such a way that the seasoned British Generals found it hard to pierce through his defences and rescue Lucknow. The Nana greatly helped the Begum of Oudh in maintaining her pressure on the besieged garrison at Lucknow Residency by regularly raiding the on-coming British armies.

Kanpur re-occupied and lost. The Nana was very anxious to re-occupy Kanpur and gave positive instructions and guidelines to Tatya Tope to do his best to achieve his aims. He directed Tatya Tope to make efforts in his (Nana's) name, to win over the famous Gwalior contingent to his side for investing Kanpur once again.

Tatya Tope accordingly arrived at Gwalior in September, 1857. Sensing him as representative of the Nana the Gwalior contingent mutinied and joined hands with Tatya Tope. It was a mutiny of 5,000 well-trained soldiers with the full equipment of arms and ammunitions. That strong contingent moved towards Kalpi and on November 9th, they reached Kalpi. The brave Kunwar Singh of Banda also arrived at Kalpi and formed part of the nationalist army.

Thus, with a large force at his command Tatya Tope crossed the Jamuna on November 10, and marched towards Kanpur.

The British Commander-in-chief Sir Colin Campbell, was at Kanpur at that time. He felt his immediate duty was to proceed to Lucknow for help, and so after making necessary arrangements.

97. Further paper (No. 4) relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies. 1857, Enclosure 36 in No. 3, p. 149 (Being letter from Brig. General-Havelock to the Dy. Adjutant General of the army dated Bithoor August 17, 1857).

and giving instructions, he placed Kanpur under the charge of General Windham and left for Lucknow on November 9, a day earlier when Tatya Tope crossed the Yamuna, for Kanpur.

Then the Nana found that everything was ready for attack on Kanpur, he reached there and himself assumed the command. An encounter took place at the Pandu Nadi on November 26 between the two opposing forces and the British forces suffered a severe setback. General Willdham gave the order to retreat.

Another encounter took place on November 27, and Tatya Tope pressed hard the British forces to fall back. A great confusion prevailed in the British army, and they retreated.

On November 28, the nationalist forces under the Nana and Tatya Tope gave yet another bitter fight to the British, and Windham's forces were almost surrounded. For five hours a bitter fight took place, the British forces were forced to retreat into the entrenchment and take refuge there.⁹⁸

On November 29 the city of Kanpur was again in the hands of the Nana and the British forces locked up the fort. The administration of Nana Saheb was again proclaimed in Kanpur and he was again Peshwa in name and in fact. The Nana was there with Tatya Tope, Bala Saheb, and Babu Kunwar Singh and the Rajput Chief of Jagdishpur of Bihar, as divisional commanders.⁹⁹

The Nana made all the Indian officers of the Gwalior contingent Brigadiers and regimental commanders.

When the British found it difficult to dislodge the Nana and the nationalist forces from Kanpur, the British Commander-in-Chief Sir Cohin Campbell¹⁰⁰ took the field in person. He was sided by General Sir Hope Grant. He launched an attack on the Nana on

98. Further papers (No. 6) relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies, 1858 (Enclosure 2 in No. 6, pp. 233-34. Being letter from Brig. Carthew, Commanding Madras Troops to the Dy. Adjutant General of the army, Kanpur Dec. 1, 1857).

99. Misra, A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, page 309.

100. Further papers (No. 6) relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies—1858, Enclosure 1 in No. 4, p. 148.

December 6. The whole day a terrific battle was fought but again the experienced and superior military strategy of the British prevailed and the nationalist forces were overpowered. Taty Tope escaped with his men and guns under the cover of darkness in the night. Nana Saheb with a large party of his followers was also able to retire with his men and material, and all reached safely to Bithoor.

On December 8th, the Commander-in-chief sent Hope Grant in pursuit of the Indian army to Bithoor. Hope Grant in hot pursuit rushed at the Indian army positions and after a severe engagement, won the day for them. Taty Tope again escaped and Nana Saheb safely landed on Oudh soil.

Thus, from November 29th to December 6, 1857 Kanpur was in the hands of the Nana.

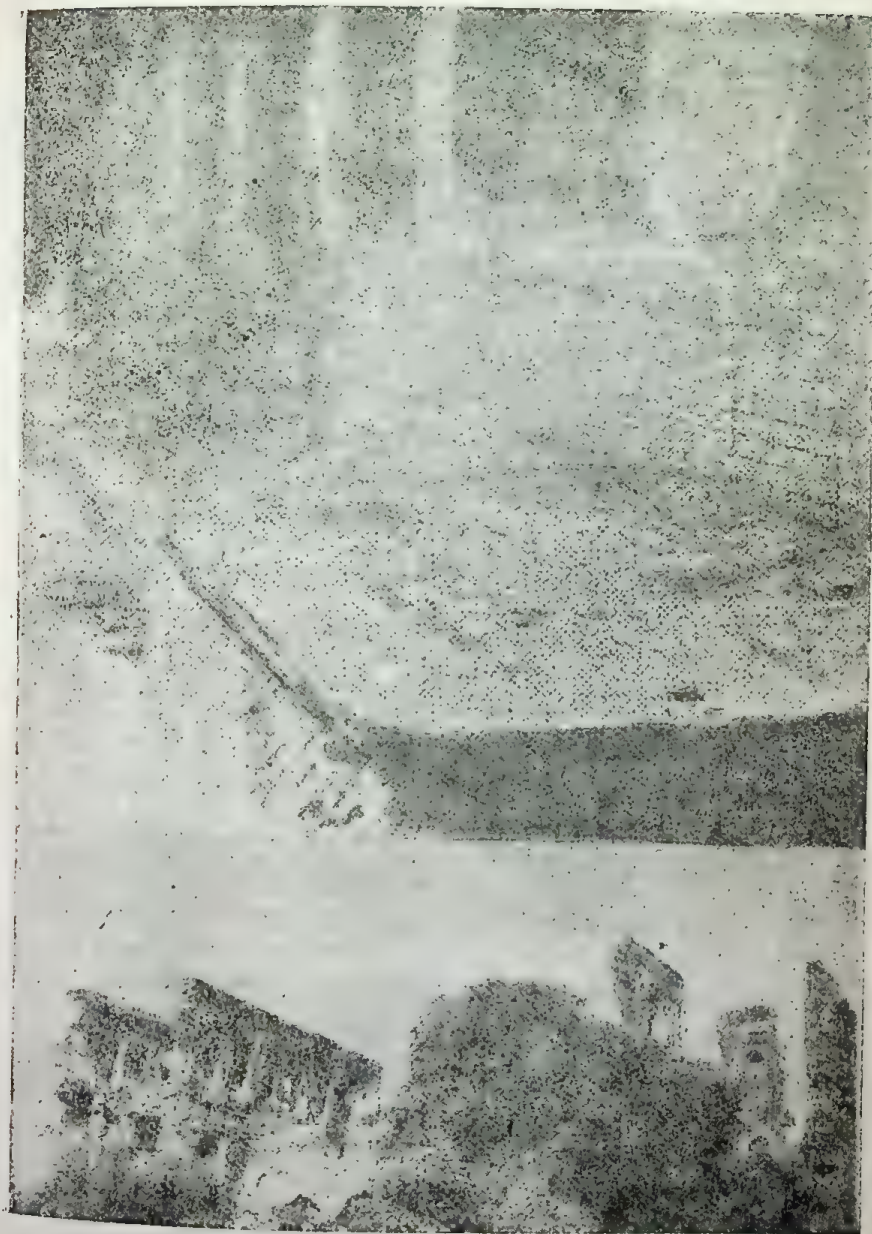
Treasure of Nana recovered by the British. Kanpur was lost on December 6, and Bithoor on December 8, 1857. On December 13, a search was made of the treasure of Nana, that was lying at the bottom of a well there. That search went on for twelve days and then on December 26, the treasure was recovered. "The treasure salvaged from the well was enormous. That included thirty lakhs of rupees in cash, that were found packed in ammunition boxes. Then there was a very large amount of gold and silver plates and other valuables. There was also a silver hawdah which belonged to the Ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao. All those were valued at one crore of rupees. Thus the British came into the possession of a booty of one crore and thirty lakhs at Bithoor. The British satisfied their vengeance by destroying the palace of Nana Saheb. The British army Bombarded the palace and reduced it into ruins.

Nana Saheb's property in Varanasi was also confiscated by the British. These properties included a garden situated in Kabir Chaura, five houses in Bhairon Bazar, a mansion in mohalla Garhwasi on Manikarnika Ghat, another house and a temple in Bangali

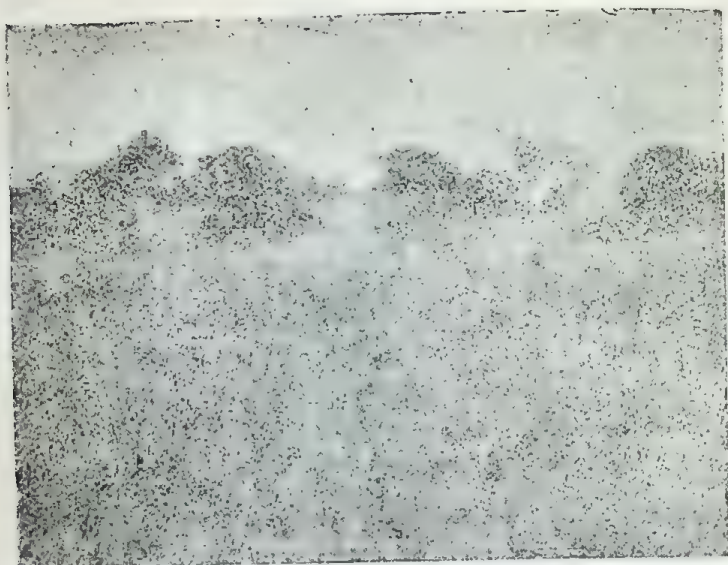
101. W. Sherer, J.W. "Havelock's March on Kanpur." p. 167.

102. Forbes, Mitchell W. 'Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny'. pages—150-158 (London-1897).

103. Varansi Collectorate Basta No. 11. Register of 1860.



Peshwa Nana Saheb's Palace in ruins in Bithoor.
(The British satisfied their vengeance by destroying his palace)

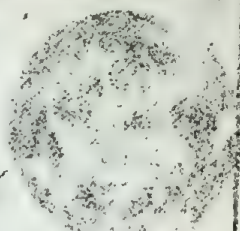


The place in Bithoor where once stood the Palace of Peshwa Nana.



The well of the Peshwa Nana Saheb's Palace

استیضار



حکومت انگریز کی طرف سے جاری شدہ ایک ایسی دستاویز ہے جس میں
 کوئی شخص جو اس میں مذکور ہے اس کی گرفتاری کرے گا اس کے لئے
 ایک لاکھ روپے کی پاداش دی جائے گی۔ اس کے علاوہ اس شخص کو
 تمام جرائم سے معاف کیا جائے گا۔ اس کے ساتھ ساتھ اس شخص کو
 تمام جائیدادیں و املاک بھی واپس دی جائیں گی۔

۱۸۵۷ء فروری ۱۵ء

نمائندہ

ہم نے درج ذیل حکم جاری کیا ہے کہ اگر کوئی شخص
 اس میں مذکور ہے اس کی گرفتاری کرے گا اس کے لئے
 ایک لاکھ روپے کی پاداش دی جائے گی۔ اس کے علاوہ اس شخص کو
 تمام جرائم سے معاف کیا جائے گا۔ اس کے ساتھ ساتھ اس شخص کو
 تمام جائیدادیں و املاک بھی واپس دی جائیں گی۔

۱۸۵۷ء فروری ۱۵ء

Notice in Urdu and Hindi issued by the British Government for a reward of one lakh of rupees for the arrest of Nana Saheb.

Tola on Chaurasi Ghat, and two other houses. The confiscated property also included the noted Laxmanwala mansion which the Government later presented to Maharaja Scindhia of Gwalior.

Though defeated on the field, the Nana was not defeated in heart and soul. The dreams of the Nana to recapture Kanpur could not materialise. Taty Tope went towards Kalpi with whatever force he could gather for himself, and Nana Saheb took up the road to Fatehpur-Chaurasi with the remaining army.

After the victory of Kanpur, the British were eager to capture the Nana dead or alive. So, the British Government announced award for his capture and proclaimed him as their enemy. All the physical signs of Nana were also stated therein. The cash award was raised to one Lakh on Feb. 26, 1858. By that time the situation in the country became unfavourable to the rebels. The British were able to re-occupy Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bithoor and other minor places and all the rebels were driven away from there.

Nana in Rohilkhand. The power and prestige of the Nana greatly diminished after his defeat at Kanpur and Lucknow. Hope Grant was proceeding towards Fatehpur-Chaurasi after clearing the soil of northern Oudh, and so it became difficult for the Nana to hold Fatehpur-Chaurasi for long. He realised that he would not be safe there any longer. He had already despatched his general Taty Tope and his nephew and his representative to Kalpi to organise the revolts and carry the message of liberty, nationality and equality to the remotest part of the land there. He decided to proceed to Rohelkhand and to re-organise his power there.

Rohilkhand was in the hands of Khan Bahadur Khan, and a rebel government had been functioning there since June, 1857. Till then the British were unable to subdue that part of the country. The Nana had his personal relations with Khan Bahadur Khan, who respected him very much. Moreover, Khan Bahadur Khan was an old man, and driven by many physical handicaps. He urgently

104. N.W.P. Proceedings, Political Department from January to June 1868 part I "Political Department". page-19 (Secretariate Records room, Lucknow).

required a man of royal status to help him and guide him. The name of the Nana was just like the magic power, to influence and foster the sense of unity amongst rank and file of every caste creed and colour.

The British forces were not successful there upto that time, and the force was inadequate to quell the rebellion. So the British adopted the policy of fomenting communal troubles thereby inciting the Hindus and the Muslims against one another. An attempt was made to finance a Hindu revolt in Rohilkhand in the closing months of 1857, authorising Captain Gowan to spend rupees 50,000.¹⁰⁵ The British tried to set the Thakurs against Rohelas and the question of cow-slaughter was also raised.

Under those disturbing conditions when Khan Bahadur Khan received the message of the Nana of his desire to come to Rohelkhand he gladly welcomed the idea and expressed his hearty co-operation.

After making adequate preparations the Nana left Fatehpur-Chaurasi,¹⁰⁶ with a heavy heart and on February 19, 1858, crossed the Ganga and came to Shivrampur. He took up the route to Bareilly via Shimli and Sikandra. On March 19, the Nana crossed the Ramganga river and reached Aliganj. After staying there for sometimes, he reached Bareilly, the capital of Rohelkhand on March 25, 1858.

Khan Bahadur Khan enthusiastically welcomed the Nana and made all arrangements for his stay. The Nana lodged himself at the building of the then Bareilly college and at once engaged himself in the task of organising his forces. He had many immediate problems before him, to solve.

The Nana, the de-facto ruler of Rohelkhand. The presence of the Nana led to a wave of enthusiasm and joy throughout Rohilkhand. Khan Bahadur Khan was an old man so he was facing many handicaps in his administrative tasks. Moreover, he

105. Sen, Dr. S.N. — *Op. Cit.* page 352.

106. Foreign Department, N.W.P., Narrative (Abstract proceedings) Narrative of events for Cawnpore for the week ending 12th April, 1958, Secretariate Records room, Lucknow.

felt obliged to the Nana for his patriotic and national outlook. So he gladly offered the leadership of all nationalist forces to the Nana and also requested him to lead, organise and administer Rohilkhand. All the leading revolutionaries of Rohilkhand also approached the Nana to accept the offer. He acceded to the popular demand, but asked Khan Bahadur to remain as the head of the administration as before, so as not to disturb the status quo. The Nana thus became the de-facto ruler of Rohilkhand and assumed the responsibilities of the leadership of the movement there¹⁰⁷ and a letter¹⁰⁸ was circulated to the Chiefs of Bundelkhand for action against the British.

By his ceaseless efforts the Nana fully maintained the cohesion amongst the Hindus and Muslims there. Thakurs and Rohellas became friends and supporters of each other. He also solved the problem of cow-slaughter there. He gave good counsel to the Muslims and after his great efforts cow-slaughter was banned throughout the Rohilkhand. That was a great success. He worked as the cementing force and the task of communal harmony, which was a thorny problem to Khan Bahadur Khan, was solved with ease and comfort. Peace and order was restored throughout Rohilkhand and all had their praises for the Nana. After establishing tranquility, he set himself to the task of organising all the rebel forces together, in order to give an effective resistance to the British. For this purpose he toured distant parts of Rohilkhand. He came to know that many European fugitives had taken refuge in Nainital, and they were difficult to be dislodged. An attempt was made to do it, but that proved unsuccessful.

The Nana at that juncture realised the importance of hilly track. Though the rebel forces numbered at 30 to 40 thousands,¹⁰⁹ they could not comb the hilly area. At that juncture the idea of a hilly place as a place of safe refuge and also a convenient springboard for attack, came to the mind of the Nana, and he gave serious thought, to that idea.

107. Hardikar, Sri Newas Balaji, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 205-208.

108. Foreign Political Consultation, 31st Dec., 1858, No. 2132.

109. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 352.

Khan Bahadur Khan was weak in physique and was ill at times. Therefore, he entrusted the work of administration to the Nana, and from that time the Nana resumed full responsibilities of a ruler. He organised the rebel army on a new footing. He dismissed many worthless persons, from the army, who had managed their entry by foul means inside the rebel camp. He repaired all the forts near about Bareilly and placed them under capable guards with a strong force at their disposal. He also fortified the fort of Besauli, near Badaun and fitted the walls with cannons.

After the defeat of Oudh, Begum Hazrat Mahal along with Molvi Ahmadullah Khan came to Rohilkhand. The rebel army attacked Shahjahanpur and won the place for them. The Nana personally went to Begum Hazarat Mahal and welcomed her. She had a large army with her at that time.

The concentration of all prominent rebel leaders at Rohilkhand and the presence of a strong rebel army there greatly alarmed the British authorities. So, the Commander-in-chief, Sir Colin Campbell, directed the attack on Rohilkhand¹¹⁰ from all the four sides. Brigadier General Jones marched from Roorki, and crossed the Ganga near Hardwar. Brigadier General Walpole was to clear the left bank of the Ganges. The Commander-in-chief proceeded from Fatehgarh. Major General Penny marched from Meerut. All those forces were to converge on Bareilly.

Battle of Bareilly. The Nana wanted to halt the advance of the British forces at Faridpur, that was thirteen miles from Bareilly, but the plan did not find favour with other leaders. Consequently, on May 5, 1858, the British army under their Commander-in-chief attacked Bareilly. A firm battle was fought and the rebel army showed exemplary bravery, but they could not save the day for themselves. The battle of Bareilly was lost and the rebel leaders took to their heels.

The Nana had to leave the place for safety. For many days the British were unable to locate the whereabouts of the Nana. So,

110. Foreign Department N.W.P. Narrative (Abstract Proceedings) Narrative of Events for Cawnpore for the week ending 27th June, 1858. (Secretariate Records Room Lucknow).

secretly and in such an orderly way the Nana made his retreat that the British spy failed to know his movements. By that time he well understood that he would not be able to escape the clutches of the British army any longer. He wished his household and family a safe asylum, and Nepal appeared to him the best place for it. So, under escort he sent his family and other members of the Peshwa's family to Nepal. Then he himself proceeded to Mohamadi where there were rebel leaders. From Mohamadi, he went to Shahjahanpur which after the fall of Bareilly became the centre of the revolutionaries. The Nana again tried to organise a strong resistance against the British. Many other rebel leaders joined him there. Realising the danger in Shahjahanpur, the British army attacked it from two directions. The Nana and Begum Hazrat Mahal were present there. Their presence created a great danger to the British. Sir Colin Campbell arrived there. Brigadier General Jones was waging a desperate war with the rebels. A severe fight ensued, in which again the rebel forces suffered set back. Another encounter was fought in Powain, but the result was a foregone conclusion. The rebel army was completely defeated and its leaders again escaped.

The commander-in-chief, Sir Colin Campbell, tired and exhausted returned to Fatehgarh, after leaving Walpole in charge of Rohilkhand. He even postponed the Oudh campaign for the winter season.

After finding the British army inside their cantonments, the rebel leaders again assembled and the Nana, Begum Hasrat Mahal, Beni Madho, Narpatt Singh and Medhi Hasan again started to organise their men and collect material for fighting. They were able to collect an army of 25,000 strong soldiers. The Nana with redoubled vigour and strength, set all his disarrayed troops in order and trained them in to meet the future danger effectively. During all those days the Nana was busy in his plans.

Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope. The Nana had the satisfaction to see that Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope were effectively playing their roles, given to them by him. They both took the name of the Nana far and wide and delivered his message of patriotism, nationalism and liberty, wherever they visited.

After the defeat of Kanpur, Tatya Tope again went to Kalpi and organised his forces there. He requested the Nana to come over there as the head of the army. The Nana however, did not find that place very safe for him and so he sent his nephew Rao Saheb as his representative there to work as Peshwa in his place.

Rani Laxmi Bai. Jhansi by that time had become victim of British attack and Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi wrote a letter to the Nana for help. The Nana was not present at Kalpi, instead Rao Saheb was acting Peshwa there. The letter reached him and at once Rao Saheb asked Tatya Tope to proceed to Jhansi for helping Rani Laxmi Bai.¹¹¹

Rani Laxmi Bai was like a sister to the Nana. They had spent their childhood days at Bithoor in the mansion of Baji Rao. So, it was the moral as well as political duty of the Nana to help Laxmi Bai.

Accordingly, Tatya Tope marched towards Jhansi and met the forces of Sir Hugh Rose ready to face him. On April 1st 1858, the two armies met each other, but Tatya failed to win the battle and retreated. Jhansi fell to the British forces and Laxmi Bai became a fugitive since the morning of April 6, 1858.¹¹²

Rani Laxmi Bai headed towards Kalpi and after a tiresome journey, reached there. Kalpi was situated on the south bank of the river Yamuna at a distance of 46 miles from Kanpur. It was 102 miles from Jhansi. So, she had to cover that route on horse. Rao Saheb made all the arrangements for her stay there. But, Sir Hugh Rose advanced with his army and attacked Kalpi on May 15, 1858 and defeated Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope.

When the Nana was waging his war against the British in Rohilkhand Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope were doing their best in Bundelkhand, at the same time. After the reverses at Kalpi, Rao Saheb with others reached Gopalpur on May 26. A war council was held there in which Rao Saheb, Rani Laxmi Bai, Tatya Tope,

111. Foreign Consultations May 28, 1858 No. 127 National Archives, New Delhi.

112. Foreign Secret Consultations, May 30th, 1858 No. 127, 128 National Archives, New Delhi.

Mohammad Ishak of Bithoor, Moropant from Gwalior, Ram Rao Govind Deshmukh, and Gauri Shanker of the defeated army of Delhi, and others took part.

It was also decided to proceed to Deccan, but Tatya Tope was awaiting the orders from the Nana and he expected him to be there, and he was also convinced that to proceed to the south was more difficult than to wage the war in the north, for the south was virtually calm, and the British had consolidated their position there and there they were strong enough to face any danger. So, the idea to move towards the south was postponed and the plan of Rani Jhansi was accepted to attack and win Gwalior.

Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb marched towards Gwalior and attacked Gwalior which fell to rebel hands on June 1, 1858. But again Sir Hugh Rose attacked Gwalior on June 19, and captured the fort on June 20th. Rani Laxmi fell fighting in that fight and a great adherent of the Nana passed away.

Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb crossed the Chambal and fled to Rajputana. Their spirit was yet unbroken. They had successfully carried the banner of the Nana wherever they went and their presence filled the inhabitants and rebels with a new spirit of enthusiasm and revolt.

From this stage onward Tatya and Rao Saheb placed their reliance more on public support and co-operation and less on military gains. The Nana also did the same in Rohilkhand and mixed himself more with civil population for fomenting the revolt. Tatya also turned his attention to the troops of the Indian states, who had once been under the authority and sovereignty of Peshwas for help and assistance.

Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope then entered into Mewar, and then came to Jhalwar. They were then within fifty miles of Indore and wanted to raid that place, but General Michal attacked them and prevented their entry there. Then both entered Bundelkhand to make that as the theatre of their operations. At this place Tatya divided his troops into two parts. He himself led the one and decided to attack the famous fort of Chandari. Rao Saheb with his division was to proceed towards Jhansi.

Tatya failed in his attempt and moved into Madhya Pradesh. He even went upto Asirgath. But receiving no support from any quarter he returned and came to Baroda. Tatya again failed in his efforts.

Rao Saheb met him there, and the two entered the small Rajput state of Banswara. Then they went to Mewar and via Bhilwara, the two reached Pratapgarh. Throughout their journey the British army followed them and never gave them time either to rest or to consolidate their power. They were hemmed by the enemy troops on every side.

The new year 1858 found the rebel leaders in the territories of Kota. At Nahargarh Tatya Tope met Man Singh as his new ally and friend, the man who afterwards proved treacherous to him.

Tatya Tope was joined by Firuz Shah another great leader of the mutiny, at Indargarh. The party then hovered in Jaipur, Sikar and Bharatpur territories. Tatya was again attacked and he had to flee Rajputana in July, 1858. The British army was always behind them, and each British officer coveted the credit of netting the arch-rebels and obtain reward.

After their disaster of Sikar the three leaders Tatya Tope, Rao Saheb and Firuz Shah decided to part from each other in order to elude their enemies, because they had all the fears that they would be tracked and trapped.

The end of Tatya Tope & Rao Saheb. Tatya Tope left the camp of Rao Saheb and went to the forest of Paron to seek the shelter of Man Singh. In April, 1859 Man Singh betrayed Tatya Tope and informed the British about his presence to Major Meade, camping at Mushairi Meades Camp. Tatya Tope was arrested and was court-martialled on April 5, 1859.¹¹³ He was found guilty and hanged. Tatya never failed in his loyalty to the house of his master. He will always be remembered as one of the greatest patriots of the country.

113. Foreign Political Proceedings No. 166 dated 22 April, 1859.

Rao Saheb was also traced in the territories of Jammu and Mr. Mc. Nabb, the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot, proceeded there and arrested him in 1862. Panduranga Sadashiv as his name was, Rao Saheb¹¹⁴ was brought to Kanpur for trial. He was, found guilty and hanged by the British.

With the disappearance of Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb, the Nana's mission came to an end in Bundelkhand, Rajputana, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.

The last Phase of the conflict. Though the British had steadily and surely consolidated their position in North India and re-established their authority, in all the places of rebellion, the spirit and the manoeuvres of the Nana and other leaders were the constant threats to British authority in India. Though the British government had proclaimed handsome rewards for the arrest of Nana Saheb, the British government met with disappointment in that direction as well. When diplomacy, valour and temptation failed the British Government again resorted to military operations, and the Commander-in-chief Sir Colin Campbell, now raised to the status of Lord Clyde again resumed the attacks on rebel leaders on November 2, 1858. By that time, it had become clear to the British Government that it was impossible either to subdue or to finish the rebel leaders. Therefore, Lord Clyde's plan at that time was to encircle the rebel troops and gradually push them towards the Nepal frontier. After reducing the Rajputs strong holds in Oudh, Lord Clyde humbled the small Amethi principality and then advanced towards Shankarpur, the seat of Rana Beni Madho. He was pursued attacked and encircled, but the utmost exertion of the Commander-in-chief failed to cut off his retreat northwards towards Nepal.

Lord Clyde was also busy in arranging his army in such a way as to trap the Nana and Bala Saheb, who were reported at Tulsipur near the Terai Region. When he moved there, he learnt that the Nana and Begum Hazrat Mahal were in Bahraich. Lord Clyde remained encamped there for five or six days in the hope of expecting the surrender of some rebels. But he was again disappointed

114. Foreign Department Political proceedings Nos. 228-29 dated April, 1862.

when no major rebel leader offered surrender to him. So, again Lord Clyde resumed his march towards Nanpara, which was situated in the midst of a dense forest. But with the approach of the British troops Nana Saheb and other left that place and took shelter in the fort of Raja of Churda. Lord Clyde reached there and after conquering that fort, he razed the fort to the ground, because the Nana was said to be hiding there.

The Battle of Rapti River at Banki. The spies of the Commander-in-chief informed him that the Nana had moved towards Banki, and when the British forces reached there a skirmish occurred there, and the rebel forces left that place for safety at Banki near the bank of the Rapti river which was about twenty miles from there. The Nana along with Begum Hazrat Mahal, Beni Madho, Medhi Hasan and others, were busy concentrating their position there. Lord Clyde was bent upon driving them away from the soil of India.

The rebel army under the Nana was ready to face the British army at Banki, near the Rapti river. The rebel leaders were trying their best to maintain their hold within the territory of their motherland. Finding the rebel forces arrayed in battle front, the British commander-in-chief made a fierce charge on the enemy. The rebel army also opened fire upon the British forces. A severe fight ensued. There was the cavalry charge and counter charge, there was infantry duel and cannonade on both the sides. The great current of the Rapti river saw many soldiers fighting each other in the water current. The fight continued the whole day and no decision came out. But the position of the British army was far stronger and hence sensing their complete defeat the next day, the rebel army along with all rebel leaders crossed into Nepal territory, where the British army could not follow them. The battle of the Rapti river was fought in December 31, 1858.

After the hard toil and hazardous marches, and driving the rebels inside the Nepalese territory, Lord Clyde returned to Lucknow on January 18, 1859.

Apparently it appeared that every thing was in calm and quiet conditions, but the discontentment against the British remained as a permanent feature of the Indian society. The National feelings

aroused by the Nana never ceased, till India achieved the independence.

The leaders of the war. The Nana relinquished his active-armed conflict against the British, but kept on his passive resistance till the last breath of his life. The British government used all her might and resources to discover the whereabouts of the Nana but failed to do so and the Nana remained everlasting unvanquished hero of the war of the Indian Independence.

The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah on 21st September, 1857, surrendered to British officer Hodson. The old emperor was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was sent to Rangoon, where he died long afterwards.

Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope were prosecuted and hanged. Rani Laxmi Bai died a heroic death on the battle field. The ladies of the Peshwa's family, two widows of Baji Rao II, Nana Saheb's wife and Bala Saheb's wife were allowed to spend their last days in Nepal. Begum Hazrat Mahal of Oudh also was allowed to live in peace in Nepal with her son and a small retinue.

Khan Bahadur Khan of Rohilkhand was also tried, and hanged.

Jwala Prasad, the trusted lieutenant of the Nana was also tried, sentenced to death and was hanged near Sati-Chaura Ghat in Kanpur. Shahazada Firoz Shah was able to escape from India and found his safe refuge in Kandahar.

Thus, with the disappearance of the rebel leaders, the armed opposition against the British power in India ended.

The unsuccessful end of the war. The first war of the Indian Independence ended in an unsuccessful note. The fighters of freedom, and nationalism were defeated and the British power won the day for them. Yet it was very significant in many respects. The Nana, the leader of the movement never surrendered and in a way the war of liberation of India remained, though in a latent form, always present in the heart of Indians, who always cherished their liberty and freedom from the clutches of the British. The rule of the Mughal dynasty that began in India with Babar in

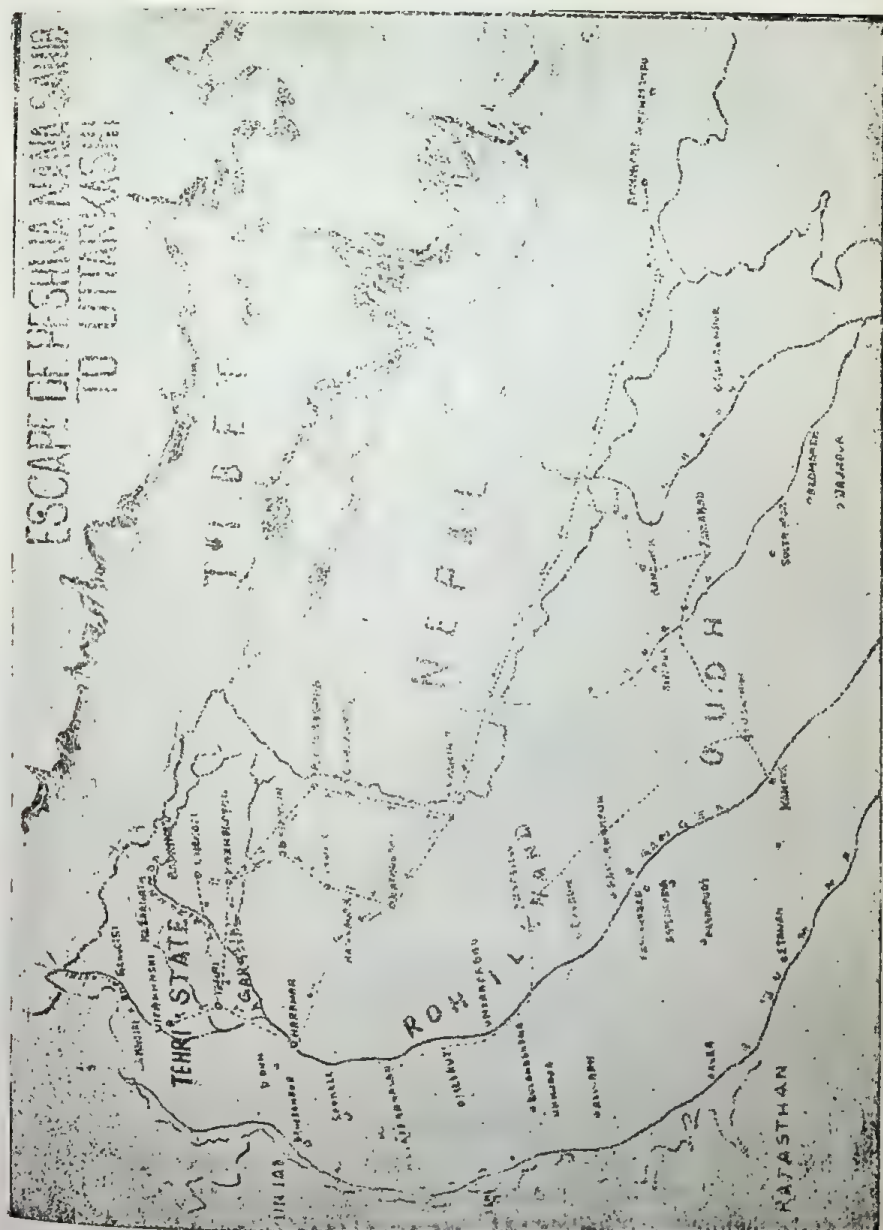
1526 A.D. came to an end for ever in India with the departure of Bahadur Shah as prisoner to Rangoon. The Rule of the East India Company was also brought to an end by a Bill passed in the two houses of the British Parliament in August, 1858 and the Queen's Proclamation placed India under the direct rule of Great Britain since then.

The spirit of liberty, nationality and equality that was shown by the Nana to his countrymen in his great struggle of 1857, continued guiding the Indians ever since till the independence was achieved. So, materially the war was a lost affair, but morally and ethically it was a victory for the Indians.

CHAPTER VI

Nana Saheb's Flight and Escape and his last days

The closing skirmishes. December 31st, 1858 saw the last major engagement of the rebel armies under Nana Saheb with the British armies led by the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Clyde, who in his relentless pursuit for more than six months was unable to achieve complete victory over the Nana and his other rebel leaders. The battle of Rapti near Banki was neither a defeat nor a victory for either side and ultimately Lord Clyde thought it better to return to Lucknow on January 18, 1859, after driving away the rebel leaders further north into Nepal Terai. The utmost exertion of the Commander-in-Chief failed to cut off the retreat of the Peshwa towards north-west, and Nana Saheb, his brother Bala Saheb, his trusted lieutenant Jwala Prasad with other prominent leaders remained hemmed in a narrow region on the border of Nepal. The Prime Minister of Nepal Rana Jang Bahadur was inhospitable towards the rebels and was also not sympathetic towards the cause for which they were fighting. He was pro-British and did not like to offend the British Government. Maharaja Jang Bahadur was also not favourable towards the rebel leaders, and it was a known fact that he would hand over Nana Saheb to the British, if he was successful in his attempts. Realising that danger, the Nana remained hiding in Nepal Terai, opening his negotiations with the Nepal Darbar.



Thus, when the principal rebel leaders found their way into Nepal territory¹ the Nana concealed his presence there. The number of the followers of the rebel leaders was estimated from four to twenty five thousands. The majority of those followers belonged to the Nana, who had a good number of his sepoys with him at that time.

Nana Saheb, with a large force went into the jungles of Bahraich. The ladies were sent to Nepal where they were lodged in Taragari with respect and honour. Two villages were purchased in their names,² and after settling there, Sai Bai, the widow of Baji Rao II, purchased eight villages, named Govindpur, Sirsiya, Ghangarwa, Simkhari, Madanpur, Katli, Baria Katli, Barwa and Pokhariya. The collective name of those villages was known as Ranigang.

Thus, relieved about the ladies, the Nana again set himself to the task of continuing his unfinished war against the British. The Nana moved from place to place between Chitwan, Bhutwal and Nayakot. During that period many minor skirmishes ensued between the British and his sepoys,³ but the Nana was always able to escape after inflicting damages on the British armies. The field of operation of the Nana then became the Nepal Tarai. With his followers he was there and remained in rebellion. Whenever he found opportunity he used to step into the Indian territory and when hard pressed by British army, he used to escape to Nepal territory. When the British authorities found it difficult to crush the Nana, they approached the Nepal Government, who was the ally of the British and had treaty relations with them. Nepal was eager to fulfil the terms of agreements, and hence was not in sympathy with the Nana at least outwardly.

But Maharaja Jang Bahadur at the same time equally feared public disapprobation by handing over the Nana, who was Brahman by caste and was respected as pious and venerable throughout Nepal. The Nana also belonged to the ruling family of

1. Foreign Political Consultations No. 413L, 15th July, 1859.

2. Foreign Political Consultations No. 184-88—24th Feb., 1860.

3. Azimullah Khan's Diary.

Peshwas, who once had political and religious affinity with Nepal. So, due to the fear of religion, of committing the sin in arresting a Brahman of Royal class, and due to the fear of revolt and opposition from his own people, Jang Bahadur in fact avoided intercepting the Nana. During that period of uncertainty, the Nana remained mobilizing his troops in the malarious Tarai of Nepal, and kept the spirit of liberty and independence alive.

The Guerilla warfare of Nana Saheb. Nana Saheb clearly visualized, that he could no longer continue the armed conflict with the British because the authority of the British Government was re-established in all those parts of India that revolted against the British regime. The leaders of the revolt hid themselves in thick jungles. Nana Saheb was also lurking in the dense and malarious jungles of Nepal Tarai. The Nana finding himself in doll-drums and unable to face the mighty British power in open battle field, adopted guerilla warfare and continued his war of liberating his country from the foreign yoke. His hide and seek attacks greatly baffled the British authorities. Lord Clyde, the Commander-in-Chief, while returning to Lucknow on January 18, 1859, asked General Sir Hope Grant to mop up the rebel forces in Tarai area. He made arrangements to station the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry in Gorakhpur under the command of Major Richardson who was also asked to comb the area to prevent any infiltration on the part of the rebels. The British armies did their best to crush the resistance of the Peshwa's forces, but the guerilla warfare of the nationalist army under the Peshwa frustrated all the attempts of the British forces, and continued to kindle the spirit of liberty and nationalism which was surviving and burning in those gloomy days also.

By the spring of 1859, the Peshwa found himself as the only single person to stand and fight the British. All his other associates, and the leaders of the revolt had either surrendered or detached themselves from active opposition to the British.⁴ The Nana stood the test of time and single-handed waged his relentless war of national liberation against the British by his guerilla war-fare

4. Foreign Political Consultations Nos. 372-73, 30th Dec., 1859 (Supp.).

tactics and methods.⁵ On the one hand the Nana's forces used to creep into the Indian territory from the Nepal Tarai and create havoc and panic in the British domains⁶ and on the other hand, he played his psychological game of warfare by issuing an Ishtiharnama, bearing the date April 20, 1859. It was addressed to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, the Parliament of Great Britain, the court of Directors of the East India Company, the Governor-General of India, the Lieutenant Governor of North Western Provinces and to all civil and military officers. It was in the Persian language and had the seal of the Maharaja of Bithoor.

Nana Saheb sent a sealed copy of the Ishtiharnama⁷ to Major Richardson at his camp at Gorakhpur, through his messenger.

At that time the Nana was well aware that the British Government had already proclaimed general amnesty to all the rebels of the Indian uprising, contained in the Queen's Proclamations of November 1, 1858. The Queen's proclamation⁸ was announced and read out from the ramparts of the Allahabad Fort on Monday, November 1, 1858 by the Secretary to the Government of India. The Governor-General, Lord Canning, and the Commander-in-Chief Lord Clyde were both present on the spot on that day. The Queen's proclamation was addressed to all the princes, Chiefs, Zamindars, Nawabs, and the whole population of India, that, lived within the territorial jurisdiction of the British rule.

The Queen's proclamation promised an unconditional pardon, amnesty and oblivion of offences on the condition of returning of all the rebels to their respective houses and to abide by laws and to lead a peaceful life like the law abiding and peace-loving citizens.

5. Foreign Political Consultations Nos. 122 & 270, 25th June, 1858.
6. Foreign Department Proceedings, March Nos. 238-239, November Nos. 67-68 & Dec. Nos. 181-184, of 1859.
7. Foreign Political Consultations, May 27, 1859. No. 63. National Archives, New Delhi.

Note:—The English translation of the Ishtiharnama is given in the appendix.

8. The Gazette of India dated November 8, 1858.

The rule of the East India Company was terminated and the Queen of England took over administration of India in her hand. As such all the Indians living within British India, had become the subjects of the British Crown.

The proclamation laid down that the terms and conditions⁹ as proclaimed in the Queen's Proclamation would be extended to all those, who complied with the conditions before January, 1859.

Thus while sending the copy of his Ishtiharnama the Nana very well knew that the last date of all negotiations or surrender was over, yet he was keen to know the sincerity of the purpose and actions of the British so far as his own case was concerned.

Major Richardson sent a reply¹⁰ through the same messenger on the same day asking the Nana to refer and see the Queen's Proclamation that was meant for all persons.

On April 25, 1859 Nana Saheb sent a reply¹¹ which was received by Brigadier Rowcroft, the commander of the Gorakhpur District. The same day the Brigadier replied to the Nana's letter and forwarded a copy of the Queen's Proclamation to the Nana for his knowledge and consideration.

The Nana did not find sufficient ground to place his faith on such vague assurances and decided to pass his days opposing the British upto the last breath of his life. However, the Governor-General of India in his letter dated May 13, 1859 made it clear that as the Nana had failed to avail himself of the Royal proclamation, the terms of it would no longer be extended to him.

The Nana was right in his judgement of the real intentions of the British. He became all the more strong in his determination to fight to the finish. The Nana stepped into the soil of Nepal with his other associates and soldiers.

9. Foreign Political Consultations No. 618, 15 April, 1859.

10. Foreign Political Consultations No. 64, 27 May, 1859.

11. Foreign Political Consultations No. 67 of 27 May, 1859. (National Archives, New Delhi)

The British Government then wrote to its Resident at Nepal, Colonel Ramsay, to approach the Nepal Government to arrest the Nana. The correspondence¹² between the two government showed that the British were pressing the Nepal Government hard to arrest or oust the rebels from its soil. To give weight to their demand the British, even with the permission of the Nepal Government sent a military force under the command of Horseford to chastise the Nana. Being pressed from the British side, Maharaj Tang Bahadur wrote a letter to the Nana suggesting that Nepal was not the place for his hiding or asylum and asked him to quit the place. Upon that Nana Saheb replied in a remarkably fearless tone requesting the Maharaja to reconsider his stand. He also pleaded for his support for the cause of nation and religion. That letter¹³ of the Nana is a wonderful piece of courage, sincerity and honesty, and throws much light on his character.

That letter had its desired effect, though the Maharaja did not openly give asylum to the Nana in Nepal, nor apparently showed any sign of support to him, yet he physically restrained himself and his forces to do any actual harm to him any longer. Though there was a show of force on the part of the Nepal Government against the rebels and even some skirmishes actually took place, the Nana was never traced out or trapped either by the Nepal army or by the British forces, and he always remained a free and unvanquished hero. The Nana with his unconquerable followers continued the fight for the independence of his nation and struggled hard in jungles, and mountains of the Terai for the cause, which remained a guiding source of inspiration for him during those dark days of his life.

About that time the Nana wrote a letter to General Sir Hope Grant. In his letter the Nana bitterly condemned the cruel and unjust rule of the British in India, and concluded his

12. Foreign Political Consultations Nos. 183-184. Dated 19th August, 1859. National Archives, New Delhi.
13. Foreign Political Consultations No. 542. Dated 30th December 1859. National Archives, New Delhi (The English translation of the letter is reproduced in the appendix).

letter with these poignant sentiments, addressing the British as a whole.

"What right have you to occupy India and declare me an outlaw? Who gave you the right to rule over India? What! you Firangis are the kings, and we thieves in this our own country?"¹⁴ Thereafter the Nana left all hopes of any political gain by his sword and retired to the Himalayan tract of Uttarkashi, Garhwal and Nepal bordering the frontiers of India.

There is enough ground to believe that the British were really not very desirous of capturing the Nana. They adopted such measures to prevent the Nana from "again coming into the British dominion"¹⁵ and did not take any strong step to encircle the Nana either in Nepal or within the Indian territory. Lord Clyde after the battle of Banki took steps to safeguard the frontiers from any further infiltration by the Nana or his followers and asked for the instructions of the Governor-General. Lord Canning, whether he should pursue the Nana even in the Nepalese territory. But, Lord Canning did not like to annoy an ally like Nepal for the arrest of the Nana, nor did he like to injure or jeopardize the relations between the two. Certainly Lord Canning was much influenced in his conclusion that the Nana would be harmless in the Nepalese jungles and Terai areas, instead of the Indian territory.

The Government of Nepal was most surely bound to interpret the entry of the British troops inside their territory without their consent as an intrusion on their sovereignty, although seemingly the Nepal Government did not oppose the idea of permitting the friendly British troops to enter the jungles of Nepal and hunt out the Nana.¹⁶

The correspondence between the Nepalese Government and the British authorities that is preserved in the National Archives,

14. Holmes, T. R. History of the Indian Mutiny. (London-1896), page 516.

15. Russell, Sir. W.H. *Op. Cit.*, page 278.

16. Foreign Department, Political Progress 22 July, 1859. No. 199, pp. 344 to 46.

reveals the fact that the Nepalese Government were scrupulously careful not to give offences to the English by their outward behaviour, which probably did not mirror their real feelings. This is evident in a letter written by Jang Bahadur to Mammukhan, one of the adherents of the Nana in Nepal, that "The British and the Gorkha Government have been at peace and upon most friendly terms for the last 42 years, and we are bound by treaty with each other to surrender all murderers."¹⁷ This is the reason which prompted Captain C. H. Pyers, who was the Assistant Resident in Nepal to write to Mr. G.F. Edmonstone at Calcutta on 24th January 1859, "The rebels had come into the Nepal jungles, and at present they paid for such grain, goat etc. as they wanted. The Begum of Lucknow had sent a letter by a messenger to the Chowdhry of Sheoraj (in Nepal) telling him to forward it to Maharaja Jung Bahadur. The Chowdhry told the messenger he had no orders to take any letter from rebels."¹⁸

Maharajah Jung Bahadur's letter of 24th January, 1859, addressed to Lord Canning shows the Maharajah's eagerness to placate the British so as not to give them any chance to grumble or to do any offence. It reads, "Nanha Dhoondhoo Punth having faithlessly murdered British ladies and children, is the enemy of the whole world, as well as mine. My Government has also no mercy for him."¹⁹ But another letter of Maharajah Jung Bahadur, written to Nana's brother Bala Rao who was in Nepal with his brother, the Nana, reflects just the opposite view of the Maharajah that the Nepalese were not at all keen to punish the Nana and his followers in any exemplary manner. The Maharajah promised him safety if he surrendered "English ladies and native christians..... to our Sirdar Siddiman Singh Raja Bundaree."²⁰ The demand having been complied with, an attitude of benevolent indifference was adopted by the Nepal Government towards

17. Foreign Political Consultations, 30th Sept., 1859, Nos. 204/6 & K.W.
18. Foreign Department Political Progress, 22 July, 1859. No. 198 pp. 342-3. (National Archives, New Delhi).
19. Foreign Department Political Progress, 22 July, 1859. No. 199.
20. Ibid., 15th July, 1859. No. 229.

the Nana's adherents.²¹ They were thus allowed an asylum in Nepal and were not surrendered to the British. And the British authorities, it is apparent, kept quiet and closed their eyes, treating the whole affair as a forgotten one.

As a matter of fact a latent and psychological tension existed between the Nepal Government and the British. Neither of them wanted to annoy the other. Yet, both were keen to see the whole affair, solved amicably. Jung Bahadur's position as regards the Nana, was very delicate. Nana Saheb had appealed to the compassion of Jung Bahadur as belonging to a brave nation and Kshatriya blood who claimed himself as Brahman, and in the name of religion and Hindu culture and tradition demanded his protection for himself as being Brahmin. Those feelings were in conformity with the traditions of Nepal, where a Brahman was held in very high regard and so sacred that even if he committed murder, he could not be punished with death. The Rana in one of his conversations with Colonel Ramsay, the British Resident at Nepal, had told him point blank that if a Brahman were to kill the King or a woman....., he could not be executed for that. Colonel Ramsay further recorded that Maharajah Jung Bahadur had told him in June, 1860 that he (Jung Bahadur) "could catch him (the Nana) at any time he pleased, but that it could only be done by treachery and that he would do nothing that was dishonourable."²²

Thus the scruples of Rana Jung Bahadur about Nana Saheb were understandable. This also makes clear that the Rana neither offended the British nor disturbed the Nana. But it was a very great problem for the Rana to get rid of it. So, Jung Bahadur appears to have taken recourse to a sort of stratagem. In October, 1859, the Nepal Darbar sent a report to Col. Ramsay, that Nana Saheb was dead. But the British

21. Ibid., 15th July, 1859. No. 231 (National Archives, New Delhi).

22. Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission Vol. XII. (December, 1939). Letter from Col. Ramsay, British Resident at Nepal. to the Government of India dated September 8, 1860, pp. 59-62.

Resident felt great doubts about its authenticity and also expressed his disagreement about the circumstances stated therein. He thought the reported death of the Nana as a ruse to cover his escape to the Himalayan region of Indo-Nepal border. The British Resident pressed his demand for further enquiry on the reported death of the Nana, but he was told by Rana Jung Bahadur that he had received nothing more than what he had communicated to him earlier, whereupon the Resident expressed his desire that the original report required firm confirmation. Replying to Col. Ramsay the Rana observed that he himself was fully convinced and satisfied with its truth. After receiving such a convincing and definite reply the British resident avoided further queries about the death of the Nana.

That was how Mahrajah Jung Bahadur solved the difficult problem, and saved himself from the sin of handing over the Nana, a Brahman to the British. But Colonel Ramsay did not share the views of the Nepal Government, instead he disbelieved the story of the death of the Nana, and he reported this impression to the Government of India.²³ The British Resident gave strong reason for doubting the reports about the Nana's death, when he wrote that the family and the wife of the Nana showed no signs of moving. Their hair was long and they wore coloured clothes.²⁴

Azimullah Khan's Diary also refers to the circumstances, which led to believe in the death of the Nana as was conveyed to the British authorities. The Prime Minister of Nepal was keen to put the whole affair at an end. A fight in between the two persons was arranged near the palace of the Maharajah of Nepal. One resembled Nana Saheb and the other Bala Rao. One person named Madhav Lal appeared as if he had been the Nana and another man Alopi Din looked like Bala Rao. In the ensued fight, both were killed. The dead bodies were identified as those of Nana Saheb and Bala Rao. They were

23. The Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission Vol. XII (December 1929) pp. 60-62. Letter of Colonel Ramsay, British Resident at Nepal to the Government of India, dated September 8, 1860.

24. Ibid. „ „

cremated by the Nepal authorities and the British authorities were informed of the same. But the British continued to be suspicious and did not believe the report.

The author, Azimullah Khan in the concluding portion of the Diary describes that the Nana remained in disguise hiding himself from place to place and eventually died at Nimsar, Misrikh, in 1926.

A Calcutta newspaper "The friend of India" published the news of the death of the Nana on 24th September, 1859, at a place called Taraghurrie near Dhang and Deokhur in Nepal.²⁵ The same paper again published that²⁶ a Brahman named Badri, who attended the Nana during his illness and who was present when the Nana died, had stated the whole story of the sad demise of his master. It was also reported that Bala Rao died of illness in June, 1859 near Butbal in Nepal.²⁷

The version of Kusuma Bai deserves mention here. She was the daughter of Peshwa Baji Rao II. She was married to a prince of Gwalior named Apta at an early age. She was with the Nana at the time of the national uprising and also proceeded with him to Nepal. After the rising was suppressed she was allowed to join her husband at Gwalior. She was of twelve years of age at the time of the reported death of the Nana. In 1913, she visited Maharashtra at the time of her old age. There she narrated the circumstances in which the Nana died. She said that for fourteen months after the Nana had taken refuge in Nepal, he remained wandering from place to place till he was infected with fever. The Nana died near Devkhuni..

25. The Friend of India, issue dated November 10, 1859 and the Lucknow Herald dated Nov. 24, 1859 also published the news of the death of the Nana.

26. "The Englishman" A Calcutta daily dated November 3, 1859 also published the news of the death of Nana.

27. Letter from Commissioner and Supdt. Lucknow Division to Deputy Commissioner, Lucknow, Letter No. 663 of 1859. Original records in U.P. Proceedings, Secretariate Records Room, Lucknow.



NANA SAHEB

This portrait closely resembles the accepted picture of Nana Saheb. It appears to have been made from a different angle of artist Vilayat Ali. It was in the possession of Sri Pahu Lal Khatri of Kalpi. It was published in Vishal Bharat of March 1929.

This picture with a beard resembles, particularly in regard to the head-dress, the portrait appearing in Savarkar's book.



This picture, with Gwalior or Scindhia-type head-dress, had appeared in a Marathi paper. The caption below it indicated that it was a reduced copy of the portrait of Nana Saheb on ivory, which had been published in the Times of India and which had been obtained from the Library of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. This too is an unreal picture.



NANA SAHEB

The original of the picture is with Sri Narain Rao Tope (Nephew of Taty Tope) residing at Bithoor. It is said that when the family of Taty Tope was arrested at Gwalior this portrait and some others were secreted with Sri Raghunath Deva, a prominent saint of Gwalior. After the family of Taty Tope had, with the permission of Government, settled down at Bithoor this and other pictures came into the possession of Sri Narain Rao's father.



Another spurious picture of Nana Saheb. This too was published in certain newspapers with the caption of Nana Saheb.

This picture, again with Scindhia-type turban, first appeared in the Daily Telegraph, London, and later in Perceival London's book "1857", published in 1907. The book was originally published in instalments in the Daily Telegraph.



His last funeral rites were performed in her presence.²⁸ Kusuma Bai died in 1917.

Thus, it is clear, that the Nepal Government took resort to a stratagem and showed that they were satisfied that the Nana was dead. It is equally clear that the Government of India did not believe in the story and were left in doubt about the actual fact, whether the Nana was dead or not. It appears that the other versions were deliberately spread by the Nana himself or his close associates, in order to sidetrack the attention of the British Government, to make easy their escape.

The continuous efforts, on the part of the Government of India, to trap or arrest any such man, as was reported as the Nana, even upto such a late stage of 1905, very strongly makes it clear, that the Government of India never seriously believed that the Nana was dead.

On November 30, 1861 a person suspected of being the Nana was arrested at Karachi, along with another person, believed to be the companion of the Nana. Enquiries showed that he was Hurjeebhoy Brahmachari and so he was released under the orders of the Government of India. On June 22, 1863 the Deputy Commissioner of Ajmer, Major A. G. Davidson, arrested at Ajmer three persons believed to be the Nana and his associates. One was said to be the Nana, the other was named as the Narro Pant Bhatia Bhatt and the third was a blind Brahman priest. A full enquiry was conducted by the Government. But it was proved that the arrested persons were not the Nana and his associates. They were thereupon released. Two persons were arrested in Gwalior in 1874 by the Maharajah of Gwalior and handed over to the British Resident who was at that time in the cantonment of Morar. One was said to be the Nana and the other his attendant. As usual the Government of India conducted a full enquiry and ultimately came to the conclusion that the arrested persons were not the Nana and his attendant.

28. Bahra Narayana Keshav—"The 1857" (Marathi Publication, Bombay-1927) page 528-29.

Both were then made over to Maharajah of Gwalior. The name of one was Jamna Das and the name of the attendant was Munshi Prem Raj. Later on both were set free.²⁹

Another instance came before the Government, when on October 18, 1855, Harishchandra Singh, a resident of village Jagdishpur of Pratapgarh district deposed before the Commissioner, that was constituted by the Uttar Pradesh Government, for knowing the facts about the last days of the Nana. During the course of its findings the commission knew that³⁰ in Farrukhabad district, near Kannauj, there is a place known as Sarai Miran. About three miles from this place is an old temple of God Vishwanath situated on the bank of Ganga. There came a Sadhu near about 1865, who renovated the temple and lived there for many years. He left the place in great remorse on being accused for giving a false evidence in a murder case, that was committed in Sarain Miran. Some say that the same Sadhu was later known as Kailashan Baba. The local population believed that Sadhu as the Nana.

There is also a version that a Sadhu known as Kailashan Baba or Kali Sadu Baba, came to a place known as Naimisharanya in district Sitapur in 1885-86 and stayed at Janki Kund. The Sadhu there renovated an ancient temple and built a Kalika Debi and Shivaji Temple. After staying there at Janki Kund for three years, the Sadhu went to Kailashan a place about ten miles from there. Kailashan was situated on the bank of the river Gomti, that Sadhu lived at Janki Kund and at Kailashan for about twenty years.

Harishchandra told the Commissioner that his grand father Thakur Jadu Nath Singh, who was taken by the Nana with himself, when he came on a pilgrimage via Pratapgarh, saw the Nana dying on the bank of Gomti on February 1, 1926, but he further said that the Nana disappeared in the swollen flood water of river Gomti.

29. Supplement to the Gazette of India, dated January 2, 1875, pages 63 et seq.

30. 'Dharmayog' weekly dated August 22, 1976.

Another instance occurred in 1905, when at the time of the murder of Mr. Grim Wood and Colonel Quentiu the "Senapati" of the Manipur State, who murdered them was said to be the Nana. In 1906 a Gorkha subadar in the British service, while on a recruiting tour in Nepal came upon an aged man, who was a Hindu priest of a remote jungle shrine, he recognised the priest as the Nana. He reported the matter to the Government of India, but the authorities did not pursue the matter.³¹

Recently in 1970, yet another claimant came forward. Kashav Bhai Girdhari Lal Mehta, a resident of Sihor, a small town 30 Km. from Bhavnagar in Gujarat, says that he is the grand-son of the Peshwa Nana Saheb who after his wanderings came to Sihor in 1870. It was the town of his Guru Harsharam Shastri and his secretary Kalayanji, who (both) were brothers. Mr. Mehta in 1970 moved into his present house in Dane street of Sihor after the death of Jadiben, the daughter of Kalyanji. According to Mr. Mehta the Nana lived in that house for sometimes. Mr. Mehta in that house found some of the Nana's belongings and three letters said to be written by the Nana to Harshram Shastri. These letters are written in Marathi and give vivid description of Nana Saheb's adventures. But these letters are signed as "Balu Nana."

It is very much doubtful, that the Nana signed the letter as Balu Nana, and in his real name as Nana Saheb as he has signed the other letters.³² The authenticity of these letters is therefore doubtful. Contrary to Mr. Mehta's claims, Dr. R.K. Dharaiya, head of the department of history, Gujarat University maintains that Nana Saheb did go to Nepal. Dr. Dharaiya further asserts the fact that it is quite possible that the Nana might have gone to the Himalyan Kingdom.³³

'The Pioneer' issue December 18, 1874 published a very sensational news that the wife of Nana Saheb, living in Nepal, was

31. Dr. Mukherjee P.N. "The war of Indian Independence of 1857-58 in the Ganga-Jumna Doab" (unpublished) page 254.

32. Foreign Department General Docket No. 4117 of 1879. National Archives, New Delhi.

33. 'The Times of India'—Sunday March 28, 1976.

living there in the fashion of a married wife. It was also reported that the Nana used to meet her on ceremonial or festival occasions. That news made the British Government very alert, the authorities again tried to trace out the Nana but failed.

There again in 1877-78 the Government of India reviewed all the matters relating to the rebels of 1857 rising and the then Provincial Government of Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces) reviewed the cases and did not give or announce any allowance or concession to any rebel of 1857 rising. Certainly the then Government was still of the opinion that the Nana was alive. The provincial government failed to give any satisfactory reply to the centre and the penalty or award on the Nana remained in operation.

The Uttar Pradesh Government in 1953 constituted a commission to gather the source materials in Uttar Pradesh for history of Freedom Movement in India under the chairmanship of late Acharya Narendra Dev. While the Commission was busy in its work, Sri Suraj Pratap of Pratapgarh claimed himself to be the descendant of Nana Saheb before it. He said that Nana Saheb returned from Nepal towards 1900 and passed the rest of his life secretly at Pratapgarh, with his wife. His father Ram Sunder Lal was the son of the Nana and thus he was the grand-son of Nana Saheb. He produced the Patwari's Examination Certificate of his father and an alleged will of Nana Saheb. He also produced a printed booklet purporting to be the 'Diary of Diwan Azimullah Khan'. The book is both in Hindi and Urdu.

On examination, the commission found the Patwari's Certificate as a fabricated one. The word Madho Lal is there and not Ram Sunder Lal, the words 'Nana Saheb' have been deliberately inserted, which is overwriting, and the caste is shown as Kayestha, and not Brahman. So is also in the Diary, wherein Suraj Pratap's relationship with Nana Saheb appears to be interpolated. The Uttar Pradesh Government therefore rejected Suraj Pratap's claim as false.

The commission came across with a statement from one named Paimashwar Singh of village Raigarh. He deposed that

His grand-father Hakuwant Singh was familiar with the Nana, whom he saw in 1914 in a birthday celebration with the Raja Singram-on at Garhramon. He denied to have seen the Nana in the garment of a sage in 1916 while going to Bombay.

This deposition on the part of Parmashwar Singh brought to light one fact that the Nana was believed to have lived upto 1916 as a sage.

A very fantastic and fanciful account of the last days of Nana Saheb is given by G. Ward Price, a veteran English journalist in his book 'Extra Special Correspondent' published in 1957 by George Harrap & Co., London. In this book Ward Price stated that Nana Saheb spent twenty years in Macca and ten years in Constantinople and he was thereafter murdered for some political reasons. The book contains many contradictions, omissions and extra additions, due to which it is difficult to rely on the story in the book. It is possible, that the person whom Mr. Ward Price believed to be the Nana must have been some other Indian, who would have taken part in the National uprising of 1857. He could have been Azimullah Khan, the Diwan of Nana Saheb, who was mistaken as the Nana. Azimullah Khan had been there in 1855-56, was already in knowledge of that part and was fully acquainted with all the formalities that were being observed there. He must have impersonated himself as the Nana and Ward Price believed him as such.³⁴ Therefore this theory can be rejected as improbable. Moreover, the account of Mr. G. Ward Price was based on what he had heard from Sir, Harry Eyres. Therefore, it is all the more unreliable.

In this connection it is very important to note that the British Resident at Constantinople in 1877-78, had informed the British Government, that near about twenty three persons, who had taken part in the National uprising of 1857, had managed to reach Mecca. One of them was Dilawar Shekh Tayab.³⁵

34. Misra A.S.—*Op. Cit.*, pages 465 to 68.

35. Foreign Department Secrets—February, 1878 No. 61 to 116. National Archives, New Delhi.

No. 4115 1878
 FOREIGN DEPARTMENT
 Peshwa Nana Sahab of Bithoor
 Dated 29th April
 Recd. 29th April
 No. —
 Recd. —
 (2 spare copies)
 The Secretary to the Government of India
 Simla
 Sir,
 I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.
 I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Your obedient servant,
 [Signature]
 Secretary to the Government of India

The above letter, written by Nana Saheb of Bithoor on April 29, 1879, the docket of the letter, the 2nd page and the 3rd page are the reproduction.

The foreign Department of the Government of India at Simla, received the above letter, written by Nana Saheb of Bithoor on April 29, 1879. The docket of the letter, the 2nd page and the 3rd page are the reproduction.

It is just possible that Sir Marry Eyres might have taken him as the Nana and had narrated the same to Ward Price. For these reasons there is no element of truth in it as regard the presence of the Nana in Mecca or in Turkey and it can be treated as an afterthought of the British correspondent.

On April 29, 1879, the foreign Department of the Government of India at Simla received a letter purporting to have been sent by Nana Saheb.³⁶ The letter was originally received in the Viceroy's Office, then the private Secretary to the then Viceroy, Lord Lytton, sent the same to the foreign department for disposal. There is a note written by the foreign department on the letter dated April 25, 1879.

- It is sad to note that the first page of the letter is missing, therefore it is hard to say as to whom it was addressed, and from where it was written. It is an important document. This letter has a great similarity in language, sentiments, firm determination and the spirit of revenge against the British with that of the Ishtiharnama of Nana Saheb dated 1858. Nana Saheb knew English well which he had learnt from an English man named Todd. The purport of the letter is that the writer of the letter is Nana Saheb of Bithoor, his place of hiding was Kashi, that Nana Saheb was on his death-bed, that he had a plan for clearing the country of Christians, that he was connected with a person "Sarjuga". In the letter Nana Saheb of Bithoor wrote that "I fear to present myself before you. I have heard that you are on the side of the Europeans....."

This is very important in this respect that it establishes the fact that the Nana did not die till 1879, and the second important fact which this letter reveals, is that the hiding place of the Nana was Kashi and that the person whom the letter was addressed was in good terms with the British.

36. Foreign Department General Docket No. 4117 of 1879, proceedings for May 1879, No. 408. National Archives, New Delhi.

From the security point of view, the Nana could not live in Kashi, also known as Benaras, but it is quite possible that the hiding place of the Nana would have been in Uttar Kashi or the Kashi of the north. Uttar Kashi at that time was in Tehri state that was in friendly relations with the British. So, it is just possible that the mysterious letter of Nana Saheb of Bithoor might have been written from Uttar Kashi, the abode of the Nana's hidings during that time.

The above instances establish the fact that the Nana did not die in 1879. Rather, he lived a long life even beyond the nineteenth century. The Nana fully realised that the flames of the national uprising of 1857 had extinguished and it was very hard to reinfuse the same spirit of the self-sacrifice in vanquished India. So he decided to retire to the Himalayan region of Nepal and Kedarkhand.

Being a Maratha by birth and training, he was a warrior and fighter. When he knew that he had lost the open armed war with the British, he retired to oblivion only not to surrender and to live and die a fighter for freedom. For this purpose the Himalayan region of Garhwal and the adjoining area touching the Nepal and the borders, appeared to him the best abode for his escape and safety. His decision was also prompted from the point of view of political, religious and military considerations.

Tehri-Garhwal was at that time an independent state and comprised the special category of the subsidiary alliance. There was a treaty between the Tehri State and the British, under which the British could not directly interfere in the interest internal affairs of the state. The same consideration which influenced the Nepal Darbar, also influenced the ruler of the Tehri State and so comparatively the Nana felt himself more secure and safe. He had also a band of his devoted soldiers with him who were well versed in the art of guerilla warfare ready to lay down their lives for the safety of their master. It was on the route of many pilgrimage centres and shrines and pilgrims used to come from every part of India on pilgrimage to the great shrines of Gangotri-Yamnotri, Badrinath and

Kedarnath. Thus, the Nana could keep himself in touch with the latest political and social developments of the country.

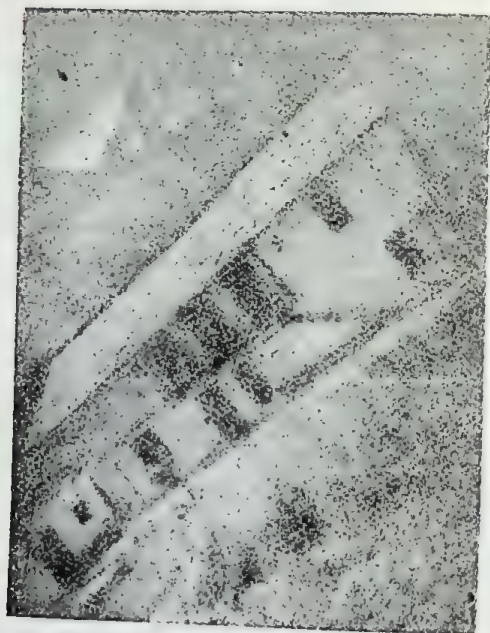
Peshwas were the great devotees of God Shivji. When the Nana was at Bithoor he used to pay his annual visit to Vishwanath temple at Kashi. So when he found himself completely isolated and utterly helpless, he preferred such a place where he could attain his spiritual salvation, and pass the rest of his life in meditation and contemplation. The satriotic idea always lurked in his mind throughout his life. Upto that period he struggled hard against the British for the cause of the nation, gladly and voluntarily. He renounced the pleasures and embraced the pains in the course of his relentless war, that he waged against the foreign foe. But when he could not materialise his mission, he sought shelter at the feet and abode of God Shiva ultimately. If not Kashi, then Uttar Kashi. He thought in himself and decided to pass the rest of his life in Kedarkhand. In this way the Nana was also able to satisfy the Nepal Darbar and to live in Background without offending any body.

Thus, the track adjoining the region of Nepal and Kedarkhand became the abode of his last days. From Nepal the Nana could easily slip into Uttarkashi and vice-versa, according to the circumstances and factors of the time.

The Nana had a great desire to breathe his last in the pious land of Kedarkhand, particularly in Uttar Kashi. So, after 1860, he lived for a considerable period in a cave in Uttar Kashi which is known even to this date as "The cave of Dhondoo Pant." This cave is at a distance of about eight miles on motor road from Uttarkashi towards Tehri. It is known amongst the local inhabitants as "Dhondeshwar Mahadev." This means that besides the cave there must have been the temple of Shivji, which disappeared in course of time.

The Nana later made a strong and well fortified residential house for himself by the side of river Bhagirathi³⁷ near Kedar Ghat

37. The Ganga is known as the Bhagirathi in Garhwal.



"NANA PESHWA KA BARA" in Uttarkashi

This is the building, built by Nana Saheb for his residence by the side of river Bhagirathi near Kedar Ghat in Uttarakashi, after his escape. This is the two storey-building on the pattern of Maratha style of architecture.



NANA SAHEB MEMORIAL AT BITHOOR

After Independence, the Uttar Pradesh Government have raised this memorial to Nana Saheb in the campus of what previously was the Peshwa's palace. This simple but dignified structure stands in the midst of a well laid-out area of several acres enclosed by wire-fencing, with an entrance gate on the main road at Bithoor. It is in the form of a bronze statue, installed on the land, which had formed part of Baji Rao II's mansion, and which has now been laid out. On the pedestal the following words are inscribed.

भविष्य दृष्टा और क्रांति मृष्टा, नाना साहब घोषो पन्त,
जिनकी त्याग ज्योति भारत को चिरकाल तक प्रकाशवान रखेगी ।

in Uttarkashi, which exists to this day. This building is known as "Nana Peshwa Ka Bara." This is two storey-building, built in the Maratha style of architecture, and on the same model and pattern as that of his Bara in Bithoor. This similarity is a great proof of the fact that it was built by the Nana for his residence. The lower storey contains many mysterious caves and tunnels. The tunnels are inter-connected and are said to have been made by the Nana for his safety and escape. The building contained under-ground doors leading to the tunnels.

Somehow the British smelt the Nana's presence there and sent a police party to ascertain the fact, but before the party reached there, the Nana had left the place to interior parts of Gangotri and Yamnotri and in such a terrain where he was untraceable. Thereafter, the search party went back³⁸ disappointed and with an impression that the Nana was not traceable there. The Nana later on handed over that building to one named as Keshar Singh Rautela, who had served him during his stay there. The Nana escaped into the interior and followed the route via Rawain to Gangotri, to Narayan Parbat (mountain), to Muktinath and then into Nepal. In order to hide his identity completely the Nana became as ascetic and remained wandering in that region for a considerable period of time.

In 1875, Vashkar Joshi, a close associate of the great revolutionary of Maharashtra, Vasudev Balwant Phadkey, came to Tehri state from Banares and remained there for sometime. As a matter of fact, he had come there in order to establish his contacts with the Nana and also to receive his blessings in his efforts to foment the feeling of hatred against the British in the South. And Vasudev

38. In 1914, when the ruler of Tehri state, Maharaja Kirti Shah, died, his minor son, Narendra Shah, ascended the throne. Because he was minor, a Regency was appointed to look after the administration. Sri Keshva Nand Mangain, was also a member of the Regency. In September 14th, 1915 he toured the state in his inspection, and came across the building, about which he wrote in his personal diary that the said building was the oldest in Uttar Kashi of its own type and was known as "Nana Peshwa Ka Bara. This diary is with Sri Survir Singh Panwar who got it from his daughter Miss Madhuri Mangain at Dehra Dun.

Balwant Phadkey who was a sincere patriot and was anti-British, raised an armed revolt against the British in the south and particularly in Maharashtra. He distributed a pamphlet in Poona in which he declared himself as the messenger of the Nana. The pamphlet distributed on behalf of the Nana, gave a call for the independence and liberation of the country from the hands of the British. It maintained that 'In the absence of the Nana,'³⁹ he was fomenting the revolt against the British.

This description corroborates the mysterious letter of the Nana of Bithoor of 1879, and establishes the fact that the Nana was alive upto that time.

It is also learnt from Swami Shudhdev ji that the Nana had a very close intimacy with Swami Shant Ashramji who was the Gurubhai of Swami Krishna Ashramji of Uttarkashi. Swami Shudhdev ji was the disciple of Swami Shanti Ashramji, with whom he used to live in Uttarkashi at the Ashram. Here in the Ashram, Swami Shudhdev ji met the Nana who had become an ascetic by then. The Nana as an ascetic used to come in the Ashram of Swami Shanti Ashramji, and Swami Shudhdev ji met him there. According to Swami Shudhdevji the ascetic Nana lived upto 1940.

It is also said that the great Indian revolutionary Subhash Chandra Bose, in 1933 sent his special instructions to the great revolutionary, Udham Singh, to proceed via Nepal to obtain the blessings of the ascetic Nana, and then only to proceed to Europe and England. Udham Singh, accordingly went to Nepal and visited the Nana there. He proceeded to Europe after receiving the good wishes from the Nana.⁴⁰

39. Joshi, V.S. "Vasudev Balwant Phadkey" page 178, (Marathi-edition in 1947, and English edition in 1957) (Publisher-Indian Printing Works, Vidya Bhawan, 121 Shivaji Park Bombay-28)

"भारत का गौरव-सरदार उद्धम सिंह"—सिरेज सिन्धे-139

40. Published on December, 1974. Near Civil Hospital Sunam-Punjab) The book had the patronage and the messages from Sri Gyani Jail Singh, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Jogendra Pal, the P.W.D. Minister, and Gulzari Lal, M.P.

Thus, from all the evidences, available so far, it is a conclusive fact that the Nana had become an ascetic, that he passed the last days of his life in Kedar Khand and that he passed the rest of his life in the Himalyas and died in Gangotic. Though in oblivion he remained the idol of inspiration and enthusiasm to all the patriots and revolutionaries of the nation.

CHAPTER VII

The Personality of Nana Saheb

His Character :— Name Saheb came to the forefront of the national scene as the leader and organiser of the great liberation war of 1857. He fought against the British imperialism for the cause of national honour, and for the liberty, equality and fraternity of the nation. He waged a national war against a foreign foe, and he did all this when, neither he was the real Peshwa nor an emperor, but simply the adopted son of Ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II. He did not have resources like the Mughals nor had he the mobile, marvellous and perfect army of the Peshwas. He was the discarded Maharaj of Bithoor, who was deprived of all his rights, titles and prestige by the British and was reduced to a state of a mere citizen of the land. With all these disadvantages on his side, he had a determination, iron will, and indomitable spirit, that raised him from the ordinary level to the highest peak of glory and immortality, and preserved his name in the annals of history as one, who with no means at his disposal fought against the mightiest imperialism and paved the way for the freedom of his country and countrymen in a way that would remain everlasting.

The Nana was very humble and modest in his origin, but his adoption brought him directly in the house of the Peshwa Baji Rao II, as his heir and successor. The Nana at once became associated with a family, that was once the ruling house in India, was second to none in power, prestige, heritage and influence. Baji Rao's pension of eight lakhs a year, coupled with the wealth he had brought from Poona, was sufficient for him to live like a monarch in Bithoor. He had a grand mansion to live in, sufficient wealth to enjoy and a large number of personal servants and usual compliments of

courtiers to attend on him. As a matter of fact, he was living a shadow-life of the ex-Peshwa. But his heart was not content, his soul was restive, his mind disturbed and his temperament injured; for he was much wounded by the injustice, which he received at the hands of the British. He was much dissatisfied, and waged his legal battle against his white masters, left no stone unturned in his attempts to get justice, did his best to obtain a compromise and compensation from the British. But it proved of no avail and that outraged his sense of justice, sincerity, integrity and peace-loving nature. His faith in the British sense of justice was shaken, his idea of living peacefully with the British ended. He found himself falling headlong from his dreams of peace to the hard rock of reality, that proved the turning point of his life, revolutionised his ideas from non-violence to violence and from peace to war. He changed the angle of vision from talks to aggression and from that point onward he became a man of action, dedication, devotion and self-sacrifice. But he was a practical man, he well understood his position and fully realised the vast resources and invincible power of the British and hence he thought it better to conceal his designs within himself, till he was able to hatch his plans. He thought it prudent to strike only when the iron would be hot and he set himself to the task of preparing the ground. This is why there is a marked change in the attitude and behaviour of the Nana before and during the period of national rising.

Thus, outwardly the Nana kept up the appearance of friendship like Shivaji of old. He behaved in a very pleasing and unsophisticated manner towards his British guests, whenever they came to his residence. Trevelyan in "Cawnpore" observed following remarks about the Nana.

"Nothing could exceed the cordiality, which he constantly displayed in his intercourse with our countrymen (The British). The persons in authority placed an implicit confidence in his friendliness and good faith and the ensignes emphatically pronounced him a capital fellow. He had a nod or a vinod word for every sahib in the station, hunting parties and jewellery for the men, and picnics and shawls for the ladies. If a subaltern's wife required change of air, the Rajah's (The Nana) carriage was at the

service of the young couple and the European apartments of Bithoor were put in order to receive them. If a civilian had overworked himself in court he had but to speak the word, and the Rajah's elephants were sent on to the Oude Jungles."¹

"All his (the Nana's) generosity had naturally endeared him to the British officers and gentry at Kanpur. They all praised him with one voice for his hospitality and goodness." Whereas the Nana observed all their formalities with his British counterparts, he was cautious to avoid the return invitations from the British officers of Kanpur. The British authorities at Kanpur discontinued to fire the guns in his honour, a privilege which Baji Rao enjoyed but was denied to the Nana. That wounded his vanity and sense of respect and honour. Outwardly he could do nothing, but inwardly he was full of indignation.

But the point of saturation arrived when the company doggedly refused to acknowledge the Nana as the legal heir to the title and pension of Baji Rao II.² And when subsequently the Nana's agent Azimullah Khan's pleadings before the Directors were also rejected, the Nana accepted the unfavourable decision with outward calmness. Though in reality he never forgave the British and determined to find a way out from that unhappy position. He felt further insulted and humiliated when Moreland, the Commissioner of Bithoor, disallowed the Nana from using the seal and title of the ex-Peshwa, his adoptive father. That infuriated him all the more and filled him with greater vengeance in his heart. Still, Moreland records after his meeting with the Nana on 17th of April, 1857, that he was "profuse as ever in his expression of respect and esteem. The Nana was also profuse in his hospitality towards the English. He would ever visit Churches and employed an Englishman, Mr. Todd to learn English and to read out to him the daily newspapers every morning. Mr. Todd afterwards was massacred at Kanpur. Thus, the Europeans had no occasion to

1. Misra. A. S. — *Op. Cit.*, page 135.

2. Agra Narratives, Foreign Deptt., April 1836 to December 1837; Secretariat Records Office, U. P., Lucknow. Narrative of the Proceedings of the Hon'ble Lieutt. Governor of the N. W. P., in the political department collection No. 16

suspect his intentions, and had come to feel that he was reconciled to his fate and was their real friend. But, the Nana never accepted their hospitality in return, for no salute was permitted in his honour.³ Plainly enough the friendship was not reciprocal and, therefore, could never be genuine.

Because the Nana played the architect roll in the national up- rising of 1857, against the British, the English historians have called him names, a 'Badmash' a 'highway robber', and 'Saitan'. But such remarks only reflect the re-actionary mentality of the British historians. Whereas Mr. Savarkar idealises the Nana, for his patriotic struggle for freedom, as a 'bright pearl in the necklace of mother India' and 'the incarnation of vengeance of the land of Hind' against the injustice of the British in India. Mr. Savarkar categorised him as 'the Narasimha Mantra of this land'.⁴ Undoubtedly, the Nana created very great confidence in the minds of the English at first. As a victim of British diplomacy and aristocracy, the means adopted by the Nana can be justified for the end, for which he employed them. The question of morality can not be a binding on him, for if the norms of morality are to be applied as a yardstick for measuring his deeds, then, it had to be adjudged for both, and since everything is fair in love and war, the Nana cannot be blamed from the moral point of view. If he is guilty, then the British are guilty all the more.

On the 21st of May, 1857, he sent 300 men and 2 guns to General Wheeler, but he had not forgotten his main objective. Sir, Francis was of the opinion, that he had no doubts that the Nana "all the time was planning the mutiny⁵," though Dr. R.C. Majumdar is opposed to this view. According to W.J. Shepherd, the Nana himself voluntarily extended his help that was asked for.⁶ The

3. Thompson, Capt. N. — The story of Cawnpore (London 1859) page—48.

4. Savarkar, Mr. V. D., Indian War of Independence, 1857. (London 1909), Page 36.

5. Tuker Sir Francis—The Private Chronicle of Henry Metcalfe (Published by London 1953) page 21.

6. Shepherd, W. J., — A personal Narrative of the outbreak and massacre at Cawnpore during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857. (Published by Lucknow 1879) page 15.

Nana was requested to protect the Treasury. This shows that there was no suspicion on the Nana even at such a late period. This again shows that he was so cautious as to keep the British off their guard. This is also a great factor to maintain that Nana Saheb was of strong temperament and was well adapted in the art of concealing his inner self. He had the patience and courage to see and wait, till the opportunity came. His action, deeds and achievements show that he had the mind of a great politician, the patience philosopher, the heart of a mother and the hand of a soldier. For his aim and objectives he could sacrifice all his worldly pleasures and comforts, he could tread on the roads of miseries and calamities and could endure the physical and mental sufferings with a smiling face. He had an indomitable will to fight the mightiest power on the earth, the British. He preferred death to dishonour and exile to surrender. He was a great revolutionary, and thought nothing less than revolution for ousting the British from the soil of the motherland. And for that aim, he organised the great national uprising of 1857.

From the case of Sitaram Bawa, tried by H.B. Devereux, at Mysore from the 18th to the 25th of January, 1858, it is clear that many important leaders including the Nana were thought to have started the 'conspiracy' to turn out the British from India. But Sita Ram Bawa's story revealed by him during the course of his cross examination was rejected by Forgett.⁷ Still, the Governor General, Lord Canning, instituted an enquiry, which did not however give any clue. The story did not find acceptance.⁸

Dr. R.C. Majumdar is of the opinion that the story that Nana Saheb organised the conspiracy and the Rebellion of 1857, gained momentum and currency from the evidence of Sita Ram Bawa, and Kaye accepted the statements of Sita Ram Bawa as correct. He firmly believed that the Nana and his Diwan Azimullah had been quietly spreading their network of intrigue all over the country.⁹

7. Forgett, C, *Our real Danger in India* (London 1877) page-50.

8. Foreign Secret Consultations Nos. 344-46. 28th May, 1858- National Archives, New Delhi.

9. Kaye, Sir J.W., *A History of the Sepoy war in India* (London-1880) Vol. I, pp. 578-9.

Dr. R.C. Majumdar does not accept it. But his opinion is based on ignoring the fact that the Nana attempted to bring about unity of the Hindus and the Muslims to prepare a solid front against the British. The Nana was wise enough to stretch his helping hands towards the Muslims as well as to accept their co-operation as a gesture of their faith and integrity. Dr. Sen¹⁰ has acknowledged this fact of friendship between the two. In support of Kaye's contention we have the opinion also of Mr. Savarkar. According to him the Nana sent his agents to almost every part of India, evidently to organise the rising.

The Nana, while actively organising the Rising of 1857, was wise enough to associate and accommodate the name and fame of the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, with himself. He, for all practical reasons, accepted the suzerainty of Bahadur Shah II and himself assumed the role of a Peshwa and as an expression of his loyalty towards him, obtained instructions from the Emperor.¹¹ At Kanpur when Nana Saheb hesitated to take the lead, he was implored by all concerned to lead them and to fight.¹² This also shows that the nationalists were also eager to have the Nana as their undisputed leader.

Further evidence in this regard is available from the Nana's own Proclamation in which the 'enemy-destroying fortune of the Emperor' is mentioned.¹³ So, there is no denying the fact that the Nana secretly and steadily brought together all the disgruntled elements of the country under one banner, flag and aim, to oust the British, and for this he himself visited Lucknow and almost all other military stations on the Grand Trunk Road.¹⁴ The Nana's

10. Sen, Dr. S.N.,—*Op. Cit.* page-406.

11. The Friend of India, Sept. 3, 1857 (National Library, Calcutta).

12. Military Deptt., Proceedings No. 5 of 1858. Consultation No. 144 dated 2nd Sept., 1858. National Archives, New Delhi.

13. Further Papers (No. 4) relative to the Mutinies in the East India, 1857 Inclosure 8 in No. 3, pp. 119, 120 (Being Proclamation issued by Nana Saheb dated July 1, 1857-National Archives, New Delhi.

14. Russell, Mr. W.H.-My diary in India in the year 1858-59 (London 1860) Vol. I, page 168.

hesitation at Kalyunpur and his delay in leading the rebel sepoys soon after the outbreak at Meerut, was because he was taken aback by the premature precipitation of the revolt which according to his plans was fixed for 31st May, 1857. But as it was the desire of the people he duly announced his decision to General Wheeler on his return from Kalyanpur to Kanpur and since then he was at war with the British. He did not commit treachery but openly came on the battlefield as a matter of declared policy. This shows the bright character of the Nana, and once he became a warrior he remained so throughout his life without wavering at any stage. This shows his firm determination and stead-fastness. He neither yielded to pressures nor surrendered to temptations. His inner soul remained guiding him throughout the dark days of his adversaries. His everlasting faith in India and in Indian culture and philosophy gave the inner strength and spiritual power to endeavour for his aim and to endure all pains. He was able to generate sufficient energy in himself to cope with the ordeal of time and tide and leave permanent footprints of his patriotism on the soil of the mother land and showed the path that would lead to independence of his countrymen. Such was the dynamic personality and character of the Nana, a centrifugal force in himself, of which he was proud as he himself stated in his letter¹⁵ to the British, that "If I alone am worthy of being an enemy to so powerful a nation as the British, it is a great honour to me, and every wish of my heart is fulfilled."

The Nana was a fearless fighter. Unmindful for his worldly pleasures or pains, he had a mission, an aim and a goal before him. His mission was the cause of the nation, and his goal was the emancipation of all Indians from the boundages of suffering and slavery. He had a strong conviction and character for achieving his deeds. The Nana himself in his letter, declared "Up to this time I have been fighting with you, and while I live will fight. You are well aware that I am not a murderer nor a guilty, neither have you passed any order concerning me. You have no enemy besides me. So, as long as I live I will fight....., It is strange that you, a great and powerful nation, have been fighting with me for two

15. Foreign Political Consultations No. 63 dated May 27th, 1859.
Natoinal Archives, New Delhi.

years and have not been able to do anything, the more so, when it is considered that my troops do not obey, me and I have not possession of any country.....!"¹⁶ The Nana never feared death and this is why the physical and mental calamities and troubles failed to have any impact upon his strong will, Neither it could deter him in his path of self-sacrifice and devotion to his nation. He wrote to the English, "you will see what the soldiers I have been preserving for two years can do. We will meet, and then I will shed your blood and it will flow knee deep. I am prepared to die....., death will come to me one day, what then have I to fear?"¹⁷

Such was the character of the Nana. His letters written to the British authorities are the testimony of this fact. He was an oriental, through and through, an orthodox Hindu, who believed and practised his religion and culture and valued it more than his life. While living at Bithoor, he observed all the Brahmanical observations in his daily life, but when he was engaged in war with the British the service to his country and countrymen became his religion. He preferred death to dishonour. He believed in hating the sin and not the sinner. It is for this that the Nana claimed himself innocent of the murder of any English soul. He himself wrote in his letter to the British "I am neither a murderer, nor a guilty", yet he was the avowed enemy of the British and of their rule in India.

The circumstances of the time greatly disturbed his inner repose. First he was disturbed, then he was agitated and finally he became a revolutionary and a staunch opponent of the British. He initiated his fight first for his rights, then to do away with injustice and lastly for driving away the British bag and baggages from the soil of India. That gradual change in the outlook and aim of the Nana made him a great politician as well as a mighty warrior. He under-took extensive tours of the country and sent his agents far and wide and to foreign lands¹⁸ for help against the British. The

16. Foreign Political Consultations No. 63 dated May 27, 1859, National Archives, New Delhi.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Kaye, Sir Jhon William—"A History of the Sepoy war in India." (London 1878-80) Appendix-page 3.

Nana wrote letters to Gulab Singh, the ruler of Jammu-Kashmir and to Russia and both replied to him. The British at that time greatly feared Russian advance towards the east and possible Russian aggression towards India from the North-West frontiers greatly disturbed the British.¹⁹ The Nana also opened negotiations with the French Power in India to help him to oust the British. Though he did not get much success in that direction, he was able to focus the attention of many foreign rulers and peoples towards India, and towards her deplorable condition and was able to create a feeling of sympathy for India and Indians abroad. This was a great achievement of the Nana.

At that time when everything was occidental, the Nana was brave enough to raise his head against it and also struggled hard against colonialism and expansionism of the British. The Nana was sad at heart at the rapid and zealous missionary conversion, and inroads into Indian society,²⁰ culture,²¹ tradition²² and education. The rise of Christian power appeared to him as a very great curse for the poor Indians, and he took up the gauntlet²³ and staged such an armed resistance that even the British for the time being considered themselves uprooted.

It is a remarkable feature of the career of the Nana, that he never picked quarrel with any body on the issue of the leadership and adjusted himself to the surroundings and the circumstances in which at different places and times he found himself placed. He accommodated all. His contacts and relations with the Begum of Oudh, the Nawab of Rohilkhand, Kunwar Singh, Rani Laxmi Bai, Beni Madho, Prince Ferozshah, Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah, Mammu Khan, Mendhi Hassan and others were very cordial and

19. "The Friend of India" dated May 28, 1857, and
Id. January 22, 1857
 (National Library Calcutta).

20. "English Man" dated August 7, 1845.

21. "Friend of India" dated August 7, 1845.

22. "Bombay Gazette" dated March 26, 1857.

23. "Disha Bharti" dated June 22, 1975 page 7. (National Library Calcutta).

good. So, the Nana was a good man, a good leader and a true nationalist and patriot with no trace of communalism in him.

The atrocities committed at Satichaura and Bibighar are such for which the Nana can not be blamed, because he was at war with the British and that he was in such a state of affairs, which were not within his control and reach. So, the circumstances and his position as the vanquished, were such as to indicate that at that time the Nana cared more for his safety and existence, than to plot the murders of the captive English, men, women and children. In that confused atmosphere the ghastly murder of the British captives must have been of some one else and not of the Nana. The further events also prove that though the Nana was in armed conflict with the British he never murdered any innocent British men, women or children.

But opinion is sharply divided on the question of the Nana's responsibility for that ghastly deed. Mr. J. Land gave him the benefit of doubt; Colonel Maude doubted his part in the massacre. Dr. Sen considers that he can not be completely absolved from the blame, although Qazi Wasiuddin was actually responsible for the massacre as he had been long maturing the plans for it.²⁴ Mr. Sheerer while stating that the Nana was much maligned, with motives and vengeance, by interested persons, pointed out that "the writing behind the door, on the walls of the slaughter house, Bibighar, on which so much stress was laid in Calcutta, did not exist, when Havelock entered the place, and therefore was not the work of any of the poor victims. It has excited many men to fury—the cry has gone all over India."²⁵ Mr. Sheerer's disclosure of non-existence of the writing at the time of Hanelock's entry into Bibighar, makes it clear that it was an afterthought, an innovation deliberately made to malign the Nana. The Nana in his letter written to the Governor-General and all other important officers, openly and unequivocally denied the charge of murdering the helpless victims. By doing so the Nana was only anxious to clear the

24. Sen, Dr. S.N.—*Op. Cit.*, page 213.

25. Sheerer, J.W. "Daily Life in Indian Mutiny" page 82. (London 1893 and 1910).

charge of the murder made against him falsely by the British. He was not expecting any mercy, for he well knew that the British had announced a price of one lakh of rupees on his head.²⁶ But his sense of justice prompted him to explain his position and clear himself of the false charge of murdering innocent persons. Mr. Thornhill, the then Commissioner, Allahabad Division in his covering letter dated April 28, 1859, along with the report of Mr. Sheerer dated January 13, 1859, sent to the Local Government of N.W. Provinces, acknowledged the fact that no dishonour or indignity was done to the female prisoners at any time during their imprisonment.²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel G.W. Williams who conducted the enquiry of Bibigarh, wrote in his Memorandum dated March 29, 1859, that it was a pity that proper evidence, which must have existed with respectable people of Kanpur was not there. So, he did not find any direct evidence to prove the guilt of the Nana and made adverse comments upon the veracity of the witnesses. Lt. Colonel Williams examined 63 witnesses, but no one gave any conclusive, direct or eye-witness accounts of the happenings. So the depositions of those witnesses are incredible. Kusma Bai the daughter of Peshwa Baji Rao II, and the sister to Nana Saheb by adoption, believed her brother (the Nana) innocent and did not have direct hands in the happenings. She said these words, when Sri. V.K. Rajwada and Sri Pandoba Patwardhan visited her in her old age at Poona. Kusma Bai was about ten years of age at the time of the 1857 rising. Sir George Campbell also wrote in his Memoirs that "When an enquiry was set up afterwards to find out the causes of the ghastly murders, we did not find any evidence to show that there was any pre-plan or any direction of any body in that. I very much doubt that if the Nana would have been captured, he could have been prosecuted for any crime for want of evidence."²⁸ Dr. Sen is also of the opinion that on the strength of 'such evidence as was tendered before Colonel Williams no criminal court could

26. Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 456 of May 28, 1858.

27. Thornhill, M. "The personal Adventures and experiences of a Magistrate during the Rise, progress and suppression of the Indian Mutiny" London-1884, paragraph 7.

28. Campbell, Sir George, 'Memoirs of my Career' (London 1893) page-281--

convict the most notorious malefactor'.²⁹ Tatyā Tope also in his deposition held the sepoys responsible for the Sati Chaura Ghat massacre, but made no reference whatever to the final killing.

Nanak Chand in his Journal has given an account of alleged plot to assassinate the Europeans in Kanpur, and to a great extent held the Nana responsible for it. But his description can not be accepted as true, for he was the avowed enemy of the Nana and was obedient to the British. He was out and out to damage the image of the Nana. In this matter Trevelyan committed the mistake of taking for granted the account of Nanak Chand as a gospel truth, which Kaye and Dr. Sen regard as not very reliable. His Diary is not a systematic and continuous record, which was written to prove to the authorities that he was a loyal subject and also to establish a good name for himself in the eyes of his white masters. So, loyalty and not historicity was his object.

Thus, judging from all points of view, it can be said that the Nana was not directly responsible for the murders of Satichaura and Bibigarh, though the atrocities were committed in his name, and it is natural because he was the head of the Government at Kanpur at that time.

The Nana on his own part had expressed his sincere repentance and indicated his innocence in his *Ishtaharnama*, which in itself is an example of his magnanimous and kind heart and of the high virtues of his life. But that in no way diminishes his fortitude and strong determination to fight for his nation when he said "Death will come to me one day, what then have I to fear, so long as I live I will fight."

The Nana was a man of iron will and of firm faith and action, deeds and words. Nothing could daunt him from his path and nothing could deter him from his human qualities. He was an admixture of both action and mercy, faith and fortitude, kindness and generosity. He placed his reliance on the ideals and teachings of Hindu philosophy and thinking. In his political and social thinking as well, the ancient Hindu polity was his ideal, that is why

29. Sen, Dr. Surendra Nath *Op. Cit.*, page 159.

he believed in the individual freedom and social upliftment of the life. He believed in the minimum interference of the state and bitterly hated the British for their maximum and all sided interference in the life of an individual and society. Due to these fundamental differences in ideology, when he found that he could never reconcile with the British he chose the path of revolution and staged the first war of Indian Independence and became the national hero once and for all.

And it was the misfortune of India and the Nana that he was a failure in the end. There were many factors, that contributed to his failure. He had the intensity of his thoughts and actions, but lacked the gravity of deep thinking and minute planning. His defects were magnified by the British, who were more mature politicians and seasonal warriors, and above all the paramount power in India and in the world at that time. The soldiers of the Nana swelled in number, but lacked the skill of war. The Nana had the wonderful capacity of rallying round himself devoted bands of soldiers, but he could not train them to the same extent and efficiency as the British did and that is why the far more overwhelming quantities of the rebel soldiers of the Nana, failed to cope with the British army, that was far less in number but by far superior in fighting skill and organisation. Once the Nana's soldiers faced defeat, they could not withstand the further onslaught of the British and either retreated or fled. The nationalist army of the Nana, could not maintain the same spirit of enthusiasm after a defeat which they had before the actual armed engagement with the British soldiers. Himself a very good rider, a skilled swordsman a fine shot and a strong fighter, the Nana could not impart the same training to his men for a long time, and so failed when the actual hour of the assault arrived. The Nana could not keep up his initial success and had to meet failure in the end. But that in no way damped his spirit. The Nana also seems to have failed to bring about the unity of purpose and action amongst all the leaders of the national rising, that greatly helped the British to isolate them one by one, defeating them all in their isolated efforts and at different places. Though the Nana was able to create the psychological and emotional impact on a national scale against the British, foster unity amongst the Hindus and Muslims, but he failed to

bring under his banner all the leaders of the rising, and avoid the local wars. That proved fatal to his cause.

When the Nana assumed the role of the Peshwa at Kanpur after his victory, he did not set himself up to the task of rebuilding the damaged affairs of state, consolidating his position and strengthening his men, material and money, rather he wasted considerable time in enjoyments and public engagements. His whiling away the time even in those days proved very costly for him, the British authorities took full advantage of his lapses, and calculating upon his errors, they made much amends of their losses. His administration at Kanpur was quite good, but he failed to establish himself as a great administrator. In his defence, it can be said that whatever he did, he did to the best of his capacities. Yet it is true that his administration was more military in character and less civil. He did not exhibit any distinction between the Hindus and the Muslims, and employed those who were capable in his eyes for the post. Ability and devotion were the key-note of his test in his service. It is creditable for the Nana that he never used his authority or position for any barbarous act or for plundering the civil population or even his enemies.

He was a noble soul, and looked after the interest of the members of his family with full sense of responsibility. While at Bithoor, he acted as the head of the family and maintained all the traditions of the great house of the Peshwas. In his wanderings as well, he looked after their comforts with attention and care. After he had lost the ground, he entered into negotiations with the Nepal Darbar and was successful in making the Nepal Government agree to give proper and safe refuge to the female members of his family and they all settled in Raniganj and passed the rest of their lives in peace and security. The Nana was not addicted to any sexual pleasures or worldly vices, and led a clean moral and pious life. He loved his brothers, and gave them their due share and respect in his private and public dealings. Though Bala Saheb, in his letter,³⁰ addressed to the British Government complained of being kept in duress by the Nana against his wishes, it appears to

30. Foreign Political Consultations No. 68, dated May 27, 1859. National Archives, New Delhi.

be an after-thought only to escape the punishment of the British, in the event of his arrest. He was a believer of humanity and harboured no malice against the English, at whose hands he suffered so much. He was a great patriot and staked his large fortune, his bright future and comfortable life for the cause of his country and nation.

At the time of the national uprising he was in the prime of his youth, full of high hopes and dreams. His ideals made him identify his aims and objectives with the cause of the country and he joined hands with other dissatisfied leaders. That proved the inherent weakness of the great revolution.

Queen Victoria's Proclamation gave promises and pardons to various issues leading to disputes with the government and redressed many personal grievances and in that way isolated most persons with personal grievances from the national cause. The Proclamation yielded its desired result and with the exception of a few praiseworthy leaders like the Nana, the rest surrendered. Thus, the superior diplomacy and shrewd statesmanship of the British prevailed and the Nana was left singlehanded to fight for his national cause.

Then the battle was lost and the British again re-established their empire in India, the Nana thought better to pass the rest of his days in meditation and spiritual contemplation. The subsequent history of the Nana is shrouded in mystery. He became an enigma to the British and a legendary hero for the Indians, an object of speculative interest, a constant source of inspiration, an everlasting flame of patriotism and devotion, the embodiment of the sense of self-sacrifice and duty and above all the torchbearer and pioneer on the road leading to national independence and liberty.

The Nana passed the last days of his life in an elusive way and wrapt in obscurity, and breathed his last as a spiritual man in the Himalayan region of Uttar Kashi, in the neighbourhood of the shrines of Gangotri and Kedarnath.

The Government of India has erected a memorial to him at Bithoor at that place where once the majestic mansion of Peshwa

Baji Rao II had stood. This memorial has now become the shrine of a patriot, the Nana, who laid his everything, including his life at the alter of Freedom of the nation as first fighter of Freedom and the pioneer revolutionary of the freedom movement of India.

It is safe to conclude in the end (without any risk of non-acceptance) that although outwardly it appeared in 1859 and for some years following that the Nana and the Rising of 1857 failed, that was not really so, such dynamic leader and such noble cause can never fail totally. Their impact was never totally lost on the national scene and the torch lit then continued to guide the destiny of this great nation for all times to come. The dawn of August 15, 1947, was the realisation of dream that had inspired the Nana and other patriots in 1857. So, Mr. Savarkar is very correct to call the Rising of 1857, as "The First War of India's Independence."

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

The great National uprising of 1857 ended in the victory of the British and the defeat of the nationalist forces, but it had its many direct and indirect impacts on the course of the future history of India. The restoration of the British authority was followed by a policy of rewards and repressions, rewards to those who helped in the restoration of their authority and repression to those who raised their arms against the British regime. Victory intoxicated the British army and officials to let loose indiscriminate vindictiveness and atrocities on the helpless and poor fighters of freedom and even innocent people in a fit of their rage and revenge.

Though the Nana lost, he remained unconquered, and a fighter for freedom, who never surrendered to the British, nor the British authority was able to trace him what to talk of his arrest. The Nana throughout the period of the uprising and even after that, generated a momentum of mass unrest, infused a spirit of patriotism and awoke the sense of brotherhood and independence in the hearts of his fellow countrymen. Like the war of America Independence, that started from the minor cause of "Boston Tea" and then assumed the magnitude of national war of independence the great national uprising of 1857 also started with the dissatisfaction of the Nana and his personal grievances with the British, but once the ball of the armed struggle was set on rolling, it gathered momentum and assumed the shape of a war of liberation in India.

When everything appeared in favour of the British, and India looked collapsing before the tide of the British superiority in every matter, the Nana came forward, gave a jolt to the sluggish Indian masses to awaken them from their deep dream of lethargy and

injected such an energy in them, that he was able to declare an undying war against the foreign rule till his aim would be achieved.

By organising the Indians to take up arms against the British, the Nana rescued the spirit of the nation, at a time when every thing appeared prostrating before the British power. He attempted to revive ancient glory and culture against the political ascendancy of the British, who were all out to engulf all the Indian states and do away with every resistance to their authority and rule.

The British were in an advantageous position, and the Indians were weak in men, material, experience, resources, technology, strategy and statesmanship. Yet the unyielding spirit of the Nana prevailed upon his compatriots to rise to the occasion in arms against the British for justice, equity and liberty.

In the beginning of the war the British looked upon the Nana as a common man, deprived of all his past privileges. But when the war ended, the Nana though vanquished was the National hero and a patriot of indomitable will. After the war the Nana became a pioneer of national independence and glory to all his countrymen.

It was the Nana and the great National uprising that forced the British to relinquish their impression that India was a heterogeneous country, composed of petty powerless principalities. It also shattered the ego and vanity of the British, that there was no one to challenge or oppose them in India. The Nana took up the gauntlet and threatened the very foundation of the British empire in India.

The great national uprising also elevated the image of India and the Indians at home and abroad, and the world at large realised that the Indians were capable of armed conflict to make their country independent.

On August 2, 1858 the British Parliament passed 'An Act for the better Government of India' and on November 1, 1858 the Queen of England by her Royal Proclamation took over the administration of India into her hands. This proclamation is

known as Queen Victoria's Proclamation. The Proclamation was couched in a beautiful and dignified language and breathed a spirit of magnanimity, clemency, friendliness and justice. It appeared more as an appeal to win over the loyalty of the princes and the people of India. The proclamation¹ ran as such.

"We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions... ..We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes as our own.....We declare it our royal will and pleasure that none being any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observations, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law.....And it is our further will that so far as many be our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service the duties of which they may be qualified by their education ability integrity duty to discharge."²

The Proclamation extended clemency "to all offenders save and except those who have been or shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects.....It was the earnest desire of Her Majesty to stimulate the peaceful industry of India to promote works of public utility.....and to administer the Government for the benefit of all and for the good of our people."³

The proclamation gave a great relief to the princes and they were assured of the integrity of their territories. The policy of expansion and annexation came to an end. As a corollary to the assurances detailed in the Proclamation, the Doctrine of Lapse was abrogated. And the right of adoption was recognised by the Queen and the policy was announced by Lord Canning at the Durbar of Kanpur.⁴ The princes were thus relieved of the anxiety of their states lapsing to the Paramount power in the event of their dying intestate. Further the Indian states having been usually regarded

1. Keith....."speeches and documents on Indian Policy." Vol I (London-1888) Pages 383-384.
2. Gazette of India, dated November 8, 1858.
3. Keith, A.B. *Op. Cit.*, Page 385,386.
4. Government of India's Notification No. 500 of November 5, 1858.

as "break waters on which the mutiny had dashed in vain,"⁵ the treaties with all the princes of the Indian states were confirmed "en block" by the British Government. In 1860 'Sanades of Adoption' were issued to the leading princes. The Hindu Chiefs were informed that adoption would be recognised and confirmed in the event of failure of natural heirs, while the muslim rulers were given to understand that any succession which would be in conformity with Muslim Law would be accepted. This was all very significant as it meant the perpetuation of the Indian states as an integral part of the Indian culture and tradition. This assured their continuance and also exhibited the fact that the Indian states did no longer exist as mere transitory government's depending for their existence or extinction on the political whims and policies of the British.

The Royal Proclamation virtually acknowledged all those principles and demands for which the Nana fought and waged a relentless war against the British rule in India. It was a great victory of the Nana's principles. The war of independence of 1857 made the British realise their mistake and forced them to correct the wrong. The proclamation indirectly acknowledged the guilts and crimes of Lord Dalhousie and the miscalculations and wrong policies of their administration during the regime of the East India Company. Sir Bertle Frere in his famous minute in 1860 wrote to British Parliament that the terrible events of the mutiny had brought home to men's minds the dangers arising from the entire exclusion of Indians from associating with the lagislation of the country.⁶

Thus, public opinion appeared in England in favour of giving representations to Indians in framing the legislation for them and as a result of this demand, the provision was made to associate Indians with the work of legislation in India in 1861 Act. The up-rising also taught the lesson to the British not to ignore the contact between the rulers and the ruled.

5. Fraser, J.S.—Memoirs of—Page 291.

6. 'Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms'—1918, Page 38.
(Government Publication—London-1918 AD)

As a good gesture towards the Indians, the Queen deeply lamented the evils and the miseries which the great national uprising brought upon India. She declared herself bound to her Indian subjects by the same obligations of duty which bound her to her subjects residing in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. She disclaimed any desire to interfere with the religious feelings and observations of the people of India.

The proclamation conceded many of the demands of the nationalists, except their desire of political emancipation and liberty. The Nana in this sphere rendered great service to his nation and people when as a matter of fact he snatched their rights from the British and restored to his nation.

The national uprising revealed to the British that mere reliance on brute force was no solution of the Indian problem, nor could India be held long under British rule by bayonets. So, from now the British observed qualified benevolence, checks and balance-policy towards India based on experiences, exigencies and demands of the time factors and circumstances, and a steady trend towards de-centralisation, became the keynote of the British administration.

The rebel forces of the British Indian army formed the bulk of the nationalist army and its rank and file was composed of them all. It was the rebel's strength and power, that formed the nucleus and the striking power of the nationalists. This was a great potential threat to the British power in India and so, in order to permanently check the further recurrence of any armed rebellion, the British Government brought an act for the reorganisation of the army in 1861, which brought to an end the separate existence of the European Army of the East India Company in India. This led to a demonstration in the form of a 'Dumpy Mutiny' by the European soldiers. It was with great difficulty that collisions were avoided.

Sir John Kaye points out that the composition of the Army just before the outbreak in May, 1857, was as such that the total

7. Ilbert.....'Historical Survey' (London—1909) page 98.

European officers numbered 6170, the total European soldiers were, 39352 and the total Indian Officers and soldiers numbered 232224, the whole army's total strength amounted to 277746. Besides the Royal Troops numbred altogether 24263.⁸

Before the uprising each Presidency had its own independent military establishments. 'The greater part of the artillery in India was manned by native soldiers.'⁹

All this was changed after the uprising. A Royal Commission known as the Peel Commission was appointed in 1858 which submitted its report in 1859. The army was reorganised in 1861 in accordance with the recommendations of the Peel Commission. "The lessons taught by the Mutiny have led to the maintenance of two great principles, of retaining in the country an irresistible force of British troops and of keeping the artillery in the hands of the Europeans"¹⁰ and the third principle was incorporated by the Report of the Punjab Committee on army organisation 1858. They pointed out that "Next to the great counterpoise of a sufficient European Force comes the counterpoise of natives against natives.....To preserve that distinctiveness which is valuable and which, while it lasts makes the Mohammedan of one country fear or dislike the Mohammadan of another, corps should in future be provincial, and adhere to the geographical limits within which differences and rivalries are strongly marked.

Consequently the provincial system of army organisation was maintained and the control over the army was unified. The strength of the Indian Army was considerably reduced. "Some cavalry and infantry units were disbanded, others were amalgamated and all the Indian artillery with some notable exceptions as abolished"¹¹. A distinction between 'Martial' and 'non-Martial'

8. "The Army in India and its Evolution"-Government of India Publication.

Appendix I page 195.

9. Strachey-"India-Its Administration and Progress Page 477.

10. Ibid...Page 478.

11. "Army in India and its Evolution" Government of India Publication Page 18.

racess was created and recruitment to the army was confined very largely to the so defined martial races of Northern India, who were not educated and so without political awareness.

The majorities of Corps in Bengal and Punjab were reconstituted on the "Class Company" basis. "That is to say, the regiments draw recruits from three or four different races and recruiting grounds but the men of each class or race are kept apart in separate companies."¹² This was done in consequence of the policy of "Counterpoise of native against natives."

The strength of the European troops was greatly increased. "It was decided that the proportion of native and European troops in India should never greatly exceed to the ratio of two to one and that the field and other artillery should be exclusively manned by Europeans".¹³

In order to remedy the two defects of the older system of regimental cadres of officers, three staff corps were organised and all military officers were placed on the staff Corps of each Presidency.

In 1858 the Naval force of the company was also transferred to the crown, but instead of amalgamating it with the Royal Navy it was disbanded in 1863. No Indian Navy was created, but it was decided that the naval defence of India should be undertaken by the Imperial Royal Navy. India became dependent for her naval defences on the Royal British Navy and paid £ 100,000 a year as its cost to Great Britain. That amount increased every year as the requirements of the naval defences increased.

In order to give an impression that the British were to give a clear and just administration, two other important Acts were passed by the Parliament in 1861. The one was called the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861, and the other Act was 'The Indian High Courts Act.' The Indian Civil services Act made a provision for

12. Report of the Commission on Indian Army Reorganisation, 1879-

13. *Ibid.*

open competitive examinations to be held in London once every year, for the recruitment of members to the Indian Civil Services. In this way all higher civil appointments in India were effectively closed to Indian youths as it was not possible for them to go to London at the tender age of 21 to compete with the British youths. Under the Indian High Courts Act three High Courts at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established. In 1866 a High Court for the North Western Provinces at Allahabad was also established. In 1859, the code of civil procedure was made and in 1860, the Indian Penal Code was framed and introduced. The code of Criminal Procedure was made in 1861, and in this way the procedures and proceedings in the sphere of justice were reorganised and put into functioning. An assurance was given to respect and recognise the traditions and customs of both the Hindus and Muslims in India in dispensing justice to them.

After 1857, the Government of India intensified the 'Ring-Fence Policy, and "The Forward Policy" in relations with the foreign powers adjoining the frontiers, for safe guarding and protecting their interests there. This was the direct result of the national uprising, when the Nana established his relations with Russia, Iraq, Iran and France and exposed the Indian frontiers to foreign attacks.

The rising was a momentous one in reshaping the political, economic, military and social factors, in the context of the experiences, both had during the course of the uprising. This change of attitude towards each other, which is gradually more manifest towards the close of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the 20th century is by far the most significant consequence of the Great Rising.¹⁴

The great uprising heavily taxed and strained the financial machinery of the government. The three years of the rising had added an aggregate deficit of more than £ 30 million sterling. Canning then sought expert advice from England. Accordingly

14. Dr. Mukherjee, P.N.-"The War of Indian Independence of 1857-58 in the Ganga-Jumna Doab" Page 307.

a financial expert, Mr. James Wilson was sent out as the first Finance member of the Governor-General's Council. He managed to bring the whole financial procedure in line with English practice. He reformed the entire financial structure of the Central and Provincial Governments and laid the foundation of the new fiscal policy of the Government of India, which greatly improved the past deficit and brightened the prospects of the future.

For the maintenance of the situation of internal law and order the police was reorganised by an act of 1861. The responsibility of maintaining peace and order was provincial subject, so the central government constituted the police department under the control of its local government. The British tried to shape the full administrative setup in such a way as to suit their interest and designs. New ventures were undertaken, the old ones improved and developed. The famine policy, railways, means of communications, roads, currency, banking, industries, ports, plantations, agriculture, post and telegraphs, irrigation and canals and a number of other ventures were introduced, developed and planned.

The British victory brought in its wake the award of honorary titles and gifts of money to many of the Chiefs of the protected states. The landlords and the government servants who remained faithful to the British during the period of the Uprising. The British restored to the Nizam the districts previously snatched away from him in 1853, and also remitted his debt amounting to £ 5 lacs. Nepal as a reward for her friendship and sincerity received some tracts of forest-clad land on the frontiers of Oudh, while Sindhia the Begum of Bhopal, the Maharajah of Baroda and many Rajput princes were rewarded by territorial concessions or reduction of tributes. Knighthood and star of India titles were bestowed upon many loyal Indian princes and statesmen in 1861. A further attempt was made by Disraeli's government in 1876, through a Royal Titles Bill that "a new pledge had been given of the determination of the British Crown to cherish India. Thereby the princes and the people of India understood that their sovereign had assumed towards them a nearer and more personal relation."¹⁵

15. Montpenny, W.P. and Buckle G.E.,—Life of Disraeli (Voi. 6)-IV-93, 163, V 471.

The British also followed the policy of confiscation of landed property of all the rebels on a large scale, and adopted the policy of its bestowal on the loyalists.

The great uprising caused immense loss to human life and property and entailed huge expenses on both the sides. Rani Laxmi Bai, Kunwar Singh, Tatyia Tope, Rana Beni Madhav Singh, Maulvi Ahmad Shah, Jwala Prasad and many others laid their lives for the cause of national independence and became martyrs. Bahadur Shah the last Mughal Emperor, was tried for rebellion condemned and removed as a prisoner to Rangoon along with his wife Zinat Mahal where he breathed his last. Two of his sons were killed in cold blood. The British also lost a galaxy of their renowned officers—both civil and military. Begum Hazrat Mahal preferred to live in Nepal in exile than to surrender to the British. And the Nana escaped from the clutches of the British and always remained as a free India throughout.

The crown gave better administration on better principles. It was the rule of toleration and mercy as announced in the famous proclamation of Queen Victoria. The lessons of 1857 uprising were not lost either upon the British administration or on the Indian patriots. Both the British and the Indians learned valuable lessons from it and adjusted their future strategy against the instructive background of the great national upheaval.

A remarkable feature of the uprising was the deep sense of national brotherhood which united the Muslims and the Hindus in the common cause of driving the British out of the Indian soil. The shrewd British diplomacy saw the future danger for their empire in India in the unity of Hindus and Muslims; and so they followed such a policy as to create friction between the two communities and to make them enemies of one another. For this they adopted the 'divide and rule' policy, which afterwards became the keynote of the British administrative policy, and laid the seeds of communal unrest in India and ultimately its partition and the creation of Pakistan.

The great uprising also cautioned the British not to do any act which would encourage the feelings of nationalism. Thereafter the policy of the British was to follow a basic motive of preventing any sentiment of national unity and they did all sorts of acts which gave encouragements to fissiparous tendencies in the body politic of the country and all reactionary elements received support from the British administration. They also patronised such elements in the country which helped to counter balance the growth of nationalism in India, and instead they gave their helping hands to such elements which prompted the separatist tendencies in the country. Thus the British for their own sake greatly polluted the healthy politics of the country and introduced separate communal electorates. In order to co-ordinate all anti-national elements to their side, the British used religion and provincialism as instruments to nurture the disintegrating tendencies and gave vent to conservatism. The British also adopted the attitude of superiority complex and the idea of a master race, and began to look down upon Indians as slaves and black people, destined to be ruled by them.

To the Indians also the great national uprising was not without fruits. The sacrifices made by the Nana and his compatriots were not forgotten. It was the Nana who laid the foundation of the revolutionary movement in India, and his deeds and actions inspired persons like Subhash Chandra Bose long afterward to form and organise the Azad Hind Fauj, on the pattern of the nationalist army of the Nana. The Nana's spirit and patriotism echoed in the voice of Subhash Chandra Bose, when he called the nation to give their 'blood' and he promised to give them 'freedom'. The uprising also laid the foundation of the nationalist movement in India and a body of eminent politicians who believed in constitutional movement 'to attain freedom, founded in 1885 the great Indian National Congress, which under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, realised that power and freedom could not be snatched from the British by armed conflicts as in 1857, and hence Non-cooperation and passive resistance and civil disobedience movements of Mahatma Gandhi were cepted as the principles and weapons to attain independence and adultimately through these methods the country achieved independence in 1947, though at the cost of the partition of the country.

And the Nana after the unsuccessful end of his national struggle with the British, escaped to the interior parts of the Himalayas in Uttarkashi and always remained a puzzle to the British throughout. The British Government on their own part endeavoured their best to search out the Nana in order to satisfy their thirst for revenge. But the opportunity never came to them and the Nana's name and fame remained hanging over their head like the sword of the Damocles. And there is good reason to believe that, even though the British knew that the Nana was alive, they remained satisfied to see him in oblivion in the remote region of the Himalayas lest his reemergence might flare up any more revolution in the future.

Appendices

APPENDIX 'A'

CHRONOLOGY OF NANA SAHEB

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 19, 1825 | Birth of Nana Saheb in village Venu Taluqa Nastrapur, Maharashtra. |
| June 7, 1827 | Baji Rao II adopted the Nana as his son. |
| Feb 8, 1829 | Sacred Thread Ceremony of the Nana. |
| Dec 11, 1839 | Baji Rao II executed the will in favour of Nana Saheb as his heir to his property and title. |
| April 30, 1841 | The will was signed by witnesses and executed. |
| Jan 28, 1851 | Death of Baji Rao II. Nana Saheb succeeded him. |
| Sep 15, 1851 | Minute of Lord Dalhousie rejecting 'the Nana's right to Baji Rao II's pension. |
| 1851-52 | Nana Saheb submitted memorials to the Governor-General and the court of Directors of the E.I. Company regarding his right to the pension of his adoptive father, Baji Rao II. |
| May 18, 1852 | Court of Directors endorsed the Governor-General's decision and rejected the appeal of Nana Saheb. |
| April, 1853 | Nana Saheb sent Azimullah Khan to England to represent his case before the Court of Directors there. |

- 1856 Nana Saheb under-took a tour of important places in Northern India for the ostensible purpose of pilgrimage. He made these journeys to organise the rebellion.
- 1856
(1857) Nana Saheb's marriage with the Princess of Sangli.
- May 22, 1857 At the request of Mr. Hillersdon, the District Magistrate of Kanpur, Nana Saheb came from Bithoor to Kanpur with his soldiers and guns.
- June 4, 1857 Second Cavalry and first Native Infantry revolted at Kanpur at night.
- June 5, 1857 Sepoys at Kunpur rose in arms against the British. Nana Saheb brought back the rebellious troops from Kalyanpur to attack the British there.
- June 6, 1857 Nana Saheb was proclaimed the head of the revolutionaries at Kanpur and the British entrenchment attacked.
- 1857
- June 8 Nana Saheb continued bombardment on entrenchment. Three more guns brought against the British.
- June 10 to 23 Firing continued. Many Europeans killed.
- June 24 Nana Saheb issued orders to the Kotwal of Kanpur.
- June 26 General Wheeler surrendered.
- June 27 Massacre of Europeans at Satichura Ghat.
- June 30 Investiture of Nana Saheb as Peshwa at Bithoor.
- July 1 Proclamation issued by Nana Saheb.
- July 5 Orders issued by Nana Saheb to the Kotwal of Kanpur.
- July 6 Another proclamation of Nana Saheb.
- July 7 Peshwa Nana Saheb's message to the officers of his army.

1857

July 10

Nana Saheb sent troops on Grand Trunk Road to meet Major Rehand's detachment.

July 13

Nana Saheb's orders to Thanedar of Sirsaul.

July 14

The British Spies at Kanpur punished.

July 16

First battle of Kanpur. Revolutionary forces defeated.

July 17

Nana Saheb left Kanpur and went to Bithoor.

July 18

The Nana crossed the Ganges and went to Fatehpur Chaurasi.

July 19

The British forces sacked and looted Bithoor. The Nana's palace was also destroyed.

July 26

Bithoor again in the hands of the rebel forces of the Nana.

August 16

Gen. Havelock marched on Bithoor and re-occupied the town.

August 16

Proclamation of the reward of Rs. 50,000 by the British for the arrest of Nana Saheb.

November 9

Gwalior contingent joined the Nana's forces at Kalpi under Taty Tope.

November 26

Kanpur attacked by the Nana's troops, under Taty Tope.

November 28

Kanpur and Bithoor re-occupied by the Nana, defeat of General Windhan.

November 29

Again the Nana's rule in Kanpur and Bithoor.

December 6

The Nana was defeated by Sir Colin Campbell and Kanpur re-occupied by the British.

December 8

Bithoor was also retaken by the British.

December 10

Nana Saheb reached Oudh territory.

December 15 to 26 Nana Saheb's vast treasure was salvaged from the well of the palace of Bithoor of the Nana by the British.

- 1858
- February 19 Nana Saheb left Fatehpur-Chaurasia, crossed the Ganges and came to Shivrajpur.
- March 18 The British Government announced increase in the amount of reward for the capture of Nana Saheb from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000.
- March 19 Nana Saheb crossed Ramganga river and came to Aliganj.
- March 25 The Nana reached Bareilly and assumed the leadership of the Nationalist forces there.
- April 5 The fall of Jhansi.
- May 5 The battle of Bareilly and the defeat of Nana Saheb.
- May 15 The battle of Kalpi and Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope were defeated by the British.
- May 31 Gwalior conquered by Nana Saheb's forces.
- June 3 Nana Saheb proclaimed Peshwa and Rao Saheb was made as acting Peshwa.
- June 18 Gwalior re-taken by the British.
- July, August Nana Saheb organised his army in Shahjahanpur, Lodhapur.
- September Nana Saheb in Behraich.
- September 28 Nana Saheb's proclamation to the people of the South.
- November Nana Saheb in Nanpura.
- December 15 Nana Saheb in Barodia fort of Charda State.
- Dec 15 to 20 Nana Saheb in Banki.
- December 31 The battle of Rapti and Nana Saheb was defeated by the British forces.
- 1859
- January 21 The battle of Sikar. The British troops under General Sir Hope Grant defeated Nana Saheb's forces.

- 1859
- March 28 Nana Saheb with Begum Hazrat Mahel in Butwal.
- April 20 Nana Saheb's Ishtiharnama.
- April 25 Nana Saheb's letter to Major Richardson from Deogarh.
- 1859-60
(Winter) Reported death of Nana Saheb in Nepal. Also Nana Saheb reported to have escaped to Uttarkashi in Kedarkhand.
- Nov 30, 1860 Hurjeebboy arrested at Bombay on suspicion of being Nana Saheb.
- June 22, 1863 Appa Rau arrested at Ajmer on suspicion.
- 1874 Jamna Das arrested at Ajmer on the same suspicion.
- April 29, 1879 The letter of the Nana of Bithoor.
- 1906 The Nana reported alive in Nepal.
- 1907 Reported death of Nana Saheb in Constantinople.
- 1926 The reported death of Nana Saheb according to Azimullah's diary.
- 1933 Udham Singh met the ascetic Nana in Nepal.
- 1940 Swami Shudhdevji met the ascetic Nana in Krishna Ashram in Uttarkashi. Thus the Nana lived upto 1940 and later died in Kedarkhand.

APPENDIX 'B'

*[Foreign Political Consultation 16th December 1853 No. 106
National Archives New Delhi and Agra Narratives Foreign Department 1844-1852, Secretariat Records Office, UP Lucknow]*

The Will of Baji Rao II

This is written for the purpose of making known to Her Majesty, the Queen of England, the Honourable the East India Company and to all men. That Dhondoo Punt Nana, my eldest son and Gungadhur Rao, my youngest and third son, and Sada Shew Punt Dada, son of my second son Pandoo Rung Rao, my grand-son; these three are my sons and grandson. After me Dhandon (Dhondoo) Punt Nana (Nana), my eldest son Mookh Purdhan, shall inherit, and be the sole master of the Guddee of Peshwa, the Dominions, Wealth, Desh Mookhee, etc., Watum (family) possessions, Treasure and all my real and personal property. And he, Dhondoo Punt Nana and his heirs shall inherit the Rank of Peshwa, the Dominions, Wealth etc. and his younger brother Gungadhur Rao and his nephew Pundoo Rung Rao Sada Shew and their children, as it becomes a brother, and to the servants and the Ryuts, as it is proper, he shall afford due support and maintenance. And Gungadhur Rao and Pundoo Rung Rao, the servants, the Ryuts etc. shall pay obedience to Dhondoo Punt Nana, Mookh Purdhan and continue to serve him with fidelity and be subject unto him. And if I should hereafter beget a son of my own body, then he shall as aforesaid be the Mookh Purdhan and heir to Guddee of Peshwa ; and possess all the Dominions, Wealth, Desh Mookhee etc. Watundaree Treasur, and all my property, whatsoever and his Heirs from generation to generation. And shall provide, as is proper, for his brothers, servants and Ryuts. And Dhondoo Punt Nana and all others shall pay obedience to him and his Heirs. This

testament I have written with my free will and pleasure, dated 4th Shuval Mittee Aghan Buddee 5th Sakeh as above, according with 11th December, 1839.* After this what can be said more.

*The document was actually signed and sealed by the Maharaja on April 30th, 1841, in the presence of certain witnesses other than those who had witnessed the deed on December 11, 1839, one of these earlier witnesses being Colonel Manson, the Commissioner with Baji Rao.

APPENDIX 'C'

[Nana Saheb's Memorial to the Governor General regarding Pension and Jagir.]

The Most Noble the Governor General of India in Council.

The Memorial of Maharajah Screemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb son and heir of the late Maharaja Bajee Rao Peshwa Punt Purdhan Bahadoor.

Sheweth,

That your Memorialist's father was the sovereign of the Maharatta empire and was connected by the closest ties of friendship with the East India Company's Government. He was one of the princes with whom the company entered into an alliance for the partition of the territories of the Mysore principality. By a treaty with him dated the 31st December 1802, the company acquired territories yielding annual revenue of Twenty six lacs and by the subsequent treaty of the 13th June, 1817, territories with an annual revenue of Thirty-four lacs were ceded to them. On the unhappy rupture between him and the company, he ceded to them the remains of his empire, on the condition that a pension of not less than Eight lacs should be accorded, for the support of himself and family and a liberal provision made for his adherents. By that act he placed the company in the position of the arbiters of the destinies of India and gave the strongest proof which could be afforded of his confidence in their justice and liberality. When the Peshwa had thus denuded himself of sovereignty and power, the Marquis of Hastings acting upon the letter rather than the spirit of the stipulations which had been entered into, under date the 1st June 1818, by Brigadier General Malcolm, determined to limit the pension to the sum therein specified. By this singular determination, the actual

head of the Maharatta empire, who had previously made great cessions and at the time yielded up all that remained to him, who had abdicated sovereignty to take the position of a dependent of the Company, was placed on a footing with his adopted brother Imrut Rao for the latter though but a subject, formerly resigning his pretensions to power and putting himself under the protection of the dominant authority, received for himself and his adopted son a pension only less by one Lac than that which was deemed adequate for the sovereign of the Deccan.

2. That your Memorialist's father received the territory of Bithoor in the North Western Provinces, as a Jagheer in which, by Regulation 1 of 1832, he was permitted to exercise sovereignty over his adherents exempt from the interference of the Company's Civil and Criminal Courts. An officer of the company was also placed with him, to afford him the benefit of his aid and advice, aid to be the medium of communication with the Government.

3. That your Memorialist's father, having attained an advanced age without the probability of leaving any son of his loins to perpetuate his name and fulfil the duties of religion towards the names of his ancestors and having for that purpose adopted your Memorialist and other sons in accordance with the precepts of the Shasters, was solicitous to enjoy the satisfaction of having secured to them a provision suitable to his dignity and station. For that purpose a request was preferred by him in 1844, through the channel of the Commissioner to the Supreme Government, and he was informed that the subject would be considered at a proper season, and that resolution had been approved of by the Honourable Court of Directors. Hence he was impressed with the belief that his family would after his demise obtain a suitable provision from the justice and liberality of the Company's Government, which indeed was pledged by the stipulations of 1818 to provide not only for himself but for his family. Thus although about the well-being, comfort, and dignity of their families, Hindoo princes are more than ordinarily solicitous, yet your Memorialist's father relied on the express guarantee and subsequent implied promise of the Company's Government for the fulfilment of that expectation; and with the exception of a sum of money invested in the public

securities and yielding an annual income of 80,000 rupees devoted the whole of his revenue to the maintenance of his state, the comfort of his house, and the support of his retainers.

4. That your Memorialist's father died on the 28th January 1851 leaving besides your Memorialist and other adopted sons and their children, a large family and a band of faithful adherents, with no other than the resources just mentioned not amounting to a truth (sic) of the allowance he received from the Company. The inadequacy of the sum for the maintenance of the family and establishment of a prince who was at the head of Mahratta sovereigns may be easily conceived. But it is impossible for your Memorialist to express the surprise and grief with which he learnt that the company's stipulated allowance was to be at once and wholly discontinued; that the Peshwa's family were to be left dependant on their own trifling resources and that even the sovereignty of the Jagheer of Bithoor, which had been conceded to preserve his family and adherents from the indignity of being summoned before the Company's courts was to be resumed.

5. That your Memorialist on the 24th June 1851 submitted a Memorial of the circumstances through the Commissioner, to the Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces, under whose orders that officer had been placed; but was informed that His Honour had determined, on the 3rd October last that the pension could not be continued, and that the Jagheer only would be continued to your Memorialist rent-free for life, but that the residents therein would be made amendable to the Company's Courts. Whether those orders were passed with the sanction of your Lordship in Council or not, your Memorialist is not aware. The ceassation of the allowance, immediately on the death of the Peshwa would seem to imply a foregone conclusion. But as your Memorialist's father had been persuaded to hope for a continuance of the pension to his family and the perpetuation of his state and dignity in your Memorialist, as will be seen from the subjoined translation of his will and as your Memorialist has had no intimation from the Supreme Government of the intention to treat the family of one of the sovereign princes of India so differently from the usual course of the liberal and generous policy of the Company's Government,

it is incumbent on him to lay the features of the case primarily before your Lordship in Council, with a view to the consideration thereof in all its bearings.

6. That your Memorialist would fain believe that the determination to withhold the pension granted by a solemn pact has been arrived at without due consideration of the terms guaranteed by the Company. Those terms clearly include the support of the family as well as of the Peshwa; for the 4th article expressly states, "that Bajee Rao shall on his voluntarily agreeing to this arrangement, receive a liberal pension from the Company's Government for the support of himself and family." The Peshwa fulfilled all that had been required from him, ceded his dominations to the company, and placed himself and his family in their hands. The company have part performed their engagement, by providing for his support during his life on the limited scale fixed by Lord Hastings; but they overlooked that part which respects his family. The mention of his family implies a provision for their support after his demise. In any other case such mention was unnecessary as a provision for the support of the prince necessarily included the maintenance of his family. Even if there had been no mention of the family in the stipulation between the Peshwa and the company, the nature and conditions of the document would supply the omission. For while the former in the terms of first article, "resigned for himself and successors all right, title, and claim over the Government of Poonaha", has it can be supposed by any liberal, any considerate mind, that the latter are not bound to provide a suitable support not only for himself but also for his successors, in all time to come out of the revenues which they derive in perpetuity from the dominions ceded to them? Your Memorialist accordingly submits to the consideration of your Lordship in Council, whether it is consistent with the justice and liberality which ought to characterise sovereign states, to withdraw from the family, immediately on the death of its head, the support accorded under such circumstances.

7. That your Memorialist is at a loss to account for the difference between the treatment by the Company of the descendants of other princes and that experienced by the family of the Peshwa

represented by him. The ruler of Mysore evinced the most implacable hostilities towards the company's Government and your Memorialist's father was one of the princes whose aid was evoked by the company to crush a relentless enemy. When that Chieftain fell sword in hand, the company, far from abandoning his progeny to their fate, have afforded an asylum and a liberal support to more than one generation of his descendants, without distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate. With equal or even greater liberality the company delivered the dethroned Emperor of Delhi from a dungeon, re-invested him with the insignia of sovereignty and assigned to him a munificent revenue which is continued to his descendants to the present day. Wherein is your Memorialist's case different? It is true that the Peshwa, after years of amity with the British, during which he assigned to them territorial revenues to the amount of half a Crore of Rupees, was unhappily engaged in war with them by which he perilled his throne. But as he was not reduced to extremities and even if reduced closed with the terms proposed to him by the British Commander and ceded his rich domains to place himself and his family under the fostering care of the Company; and as the company still profit by the revenues of his hereditary possessions on what principal are his descendants deprived of the pension included in those terms and vestiges of sovereignty? Wherein are the claims of his family to the favour and consideration of the company, less than those of the descendants of the conquered (sic) Mysorean or the captive Mogul?

8. That your Memorialist claims the continuance of the stipulated pension both for the family of the Peshwa, and for himself as the representative of that prince. Your Lordship in Council is aware that the Peshwa has left a family who are entitled to a suitable support as such from the company on the terms of the stipulation and adopted, under the injunctions of the Hindoo Law, three sons of whom your Memorialist is the eldest and, as such as well as by the will already alluded to, his success to his dignity and rights. Your Memorialist cannot suppose that Your Lordship in Council is ignorant that by the Hindoo Law the adopted son in no respect differs from the natural son. But if any doubt exists, Your Memorialist begs leave to refer to the authority of Mr. Sutherland: "The religious ordinances of the Hindoos (he

remarks) inculcate the indispensable necessity that a man should be survived by a male off-spring for performing his exequial rites and other purposes. In consequence, on defect of real legitimate issue, the affiliation under prescribed rules, of a kinsman or other person is enjoined ; and an individual thus regularly adopted acquires the filial rights which attach to the real son." "The adopted son", to use the words of another distinguished writer on Hindoo law, "is to all intents and purposes a member of the family of his adopting father, and he succeeds to his property, collaterally as well as lineally."

Your Memorialist, being reduced to great straits by the measures which have been pursued towards him, solicits the consideration of your Lordship in Council to his claim to the continuance, first of the stipulated pension to him and his successors, and secondly of the territory of Bithoor in its present relations, Your Memorialist trusts he will be favoured at any early date with the results of your Lordship's deliberations, as every day adds to the distresses of his situation.

And Your Memorialist shall ever pray for the stability and prosperity of the British Government in India.

APPENDIX 'D'

[Nana Saheb's Memorial to the Governor General regarding succession to Baji Rao's Title and Seal.]

To

The Most Noble the Governor General of India in Council
in the Foreign Department

The humble Memorial of Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb, son and heir of the late Maharajah Bajee Rao, Peshwa Punt Purdhan Bahadoor.

Sheweth,

That your Memorialist is deeply grieved by a letter of his agent Jwala Pershad Saheb, which solicited permission to use badges with a certain inscription, being returned from the Foreign office with an office Memorandum to the effect that "the Governor General in Council recognised no such person as Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb."

2. That your Memorialist does not understand the cause of the letter in question having been returned as he is not aware that his Agent has been guilty of any disrespect towards your Lordship in Council, because the title of Maharajah which is applicable to your Memorialist by the rules of Oriental Etiquette, was set fourth in several former references to the same department by his late Agent Raja Peerajee Rao, without any objection having been taken thereto. On the contrary it was presumable from the circumstances of their having been forwarded to the Honourable the Court of Directors without remark, that they were according to rule. But if any circumstances in the address of the present Agent was displeasing to your Lordship in Council your Memorialist submits that it should

have been attributed to his not being conversant with the form of official correspondence, and to no other cause and on the objectionable matter or form being pointed out to him, he would have promptly conformed to any directions regarding it which he might have received from the Secretary's office.

3. That your Memorialist begs leave to state that the reference in question was dictated by a natural desire on his part to do nothing inconsistent with his humble situation as a dependent upon the British Government ; and he therefore considered it to be incumbent on him to apply for the permission of your Lordship in Council to use badges for his personal attendants, with a suitable inscription thereon adopted to show both to the public officers and private persons that he had received such permission.

4. That your Memorialist is not apprised that your Lordship in Council has any objection to his using the titles and which are given to him by the custom of the country and employed by him accordingly as the representative of a succession of sovereigns. As the supreme and executive authority of the Mahratta powers (it is well known to your Lordship in Council) Balajee Vishwanath Peshwa left his dominions to his son, Bajee Rao first, who was succeeded by his son Balajee Bajee Rao who was succeeded by his sons Madho Rao and Narain Rao in succession, the latter being succeeded by his son Sevayee Madho Rao. On that prince dying without issue, he was succeeded by Bajee Rao, the eldest great grandson of the first Peshwa, and your Memorialist's father who ultimately resigned his possessions to the East India Company for a stipulated pecuniary provision for himself and his heirs. That provision has not been continued by your Lordship's Government to your Memorialist, the heir and representative of the Peshwa (though he still entertains expectations of receiving justice from the British authorities), but your Lordship in Council cannot (he believes) feel dissatisfaction at his making use of the title, which in oriental countries as well as in the West, is given to the descendants and representatives of sovereign princes, even after they have abdicated the throne of their fathers.

5. Your Memorialist acknowledges that his title is not derived from the British Government nor yet from the Emperor of Delhi,

from who the East India Company acquired the sovereignty over a portion of Hindoostan. The Peshwas owed their dominions and greatness to their own enterprise, and they have left to your Memorialist, the last of the race, an empty title, the assumption of which, in conformity to the usages of nations, to the execution of all political pretensions, and solely as a distinction of rank and descent, cannot, he presumes to think, be displeasing to the present rules of India.

6. Under these circumstances your Memorialist ventures to hope that your Lordship in Council will deign to look upon his humble situation with the eye of benignity, and afford him such marks of their kindness and consideration as they are wont to bestow on other unfortunate princes. Such acts of liberality, while they will cost your Lordship in Council nothing, will be to him a source of consolation in his misfortune.

And your Memorialist will ever pray for the prosperity of the British Government.

Sd/—Jwala Parsad
Agent of Maharajah Screemunt Dhondoo
Punt Nana Saheb

APPENDIX 'E'

[The Proclamation and Ishtiharnama of Nana Saheb, issued in September 1858, National Archives, New Delhi.]

"From Dhondo Pant Nana Peshwa, Pant Pradhan, to all the Surinjamdars, Jageerdars, Dehmooks, Deshpandeys and other Jameedars, Patels, Coolkernees (Kulkarnis), Naikwad, Shetsundes and whole of the population of the Deccan and the Carnatic, it is ordered to be proclaimed that : The English who are 'Kaffurs' came to this country under pretence of carrying on trade. Afterwards, instigating edition among our Surinjamadars and practising treachery, they seized all the Hindu and Mohammedan kingdoms, imprisoning some of the descendants of the former kings and driving others to beggary, they themselves enjoy the country. This is well known to the whole of you.

The 'Kaffurs' upon the strength of their acquisition of the Empire have turned very arrogant and, keeping up outward appearances of justice, have most unjustly destroyed life and acquired wealth and property. They have been endeavouring to delude and convert the population of this country by including them to abandon their own religion and caste, but having failed by mild means to do this they were about to use force. Tyranny, wickedness and injustice having been much practised by the 'Kaffurs' English on the faithful and sin-fearing. I have been commissioned by God to punish the 'Kaffurs' by annihilating them and to re-establish the Hindu and Mohammedan kingdoms as formerly and to proper our country and I have conquered the country north of the Narbuda (Narmada) river. To submit to and live under such wicked 'Kaffurs' is disgraceful. So immediately on the perusal of this proclamatory destory the 'Kaffurs'. By this you will gain merit, your manliness will be shown and your courage will be proved. "Ye heroes this

is the best time for you to avenge the wrongs and wickedness perpetrated by the 'Kaffurs' English on your grandfathers and on your kings. By allowing such an opportunity to escape do not suffer the stain of being effeminate and foolish to attach to the people of the South. At the present time the English, having disagreements among themselves about their religion, are quarreling and fighting and killing each other. The French and the Russians who entertained from a long time a hatred against the English and a design to turn them out of Hindustan have thought this a proper time to carry it out and with this intention they have been sending armies by sea these three months past. The Chinese also have declared war against these 'Kaffurs' and the latter having no army to send against the Chinese are much alarmed. The Persians, Afghans and Biloochees, moreover, are ready with their armies collected to aid us. In short this is the golden time to root out completely the English from this country. The "Kaffurs" English in order to discourage the population, fabricate false information of their having retaken Delhi and other places and having defeated us, and make it known among the public, but such ought not to be believed. If you allow this time to escape all of you will be liable to punishment from us and for that guilt whatever Jageers, Lands and other sustenance you may possess will be brought under attachment. This proclamation is published by order of Ullee Shan Bundeegan, Ullee Hoozoor, the Emperor of Delhi by Nana Rao Pant Pradhan Peshwa.

APPENDIX 'F'

[*Foreign Political Consultations No. 63, 27 May 1859*]

Letters of Nana Saheb

D/Goruckpoor the 27th April 1859

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for the information of His Honour the Lieutt Governor Copy of a vernacular Isteharnamah from the Nana of Bithoor brought by a Brahmin into call. Pinkney's camp at Dhukehree and delivered to Major Richardson Comdg. Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry with translation of the document and Major Richardson's reply, which have been sent to me by Brigr. Rowcroft C.B.

Goruckpoor
Commissioner's Office
The 27th April, 1859

I have the honour to be & C.
Sd/- Alans Swinton
Offg Commissioner

Foreign Political Consultations No. 64, 27 May, 1859.

Translation of an Istiharnamah to Her Majesty the Queen, the Parliament, the Court of Directors, the Governor General, the Lieutt Governor and all officers Civil and Military.

You have forgiven the crimes of all Hindustan and Murderers have been pardoned—it is strange that your sepoys have killed your women and children and Mummoo Khan and the people of rank of Furruckabad, who truly are Murderers have been forgiven and you have written to Jang Bahadoor to send the Begum and the Rajas to their own country under his guarantee. It is surprising that I who have joined the rebels from helplessness have not been

forgiven. I have committed no murder. Had General 'Hawla' (Wheeler) not sent for me from Bithoor my soldiers would not have rebelled, besides he did not send for family to the intrenchments. My soldiers were not of my own Country, and I previously urged that so insignificant ('gureeb') a person as myself could render no material aid to the British. But General 'Hawla' (Wheeler) would not listen to me and invited me (into the intrenchment). When your army mutinied and proceeded to take possession of the treasury my soldiers joined them. Upon this I reflected that if I went into the intrenchments my soldiers would kill my family, and that the British would punish me for the rebellion of my soldiers, it was therefore better for me to die. My ryots were urgent and I was obliged to join the soldiers. For two or three years I petitioned the '(roobkary Kya) Surka' but no attention was paid to it. At Cawnpore the soldiers disobeyed my orders and began killing the English Women and the ryots. All I could save by any means I did save, and when they left the entrenchments provided boats in which I sent them down to Allahabad, your sepoy's attacked them. By means of entreaties I restrained my soldiers and saved the lives of 200 English Women and children. I have heard that they were killed by your sepoy's and Budmashes at the time that my soldiers fled from Cawnpore and my brother was wounded. After this I heard of Ishtiharnamah that had been published by you and prepared to fight and upto this time I have been fighting with you, and while I live, will fight. You are well aware that I am not a murderer, nor I am guilty, neither have you passed any order concerning me. You have no enemy besides me, so as long as I live I will fight. I also am a man. I remain two Coss distant from you. It is strange that you, a great and powerful nation, have been fighting with me for two years and have not been able to do anything; the more so, when it is considered that my troops do not obey me and I have not possession of any country. You have forgiven the crimes of all and the Nepal Chief is your friend. With all this you not been able to do anything. You have drawn all to your side, and I alone am left but you will see what the soldiers I have been preserving for two years can do. We will meet and then I will shed your blood and it will flow knee deep. I am prepared to die. If I alone am worthy of being an enemy to so powerful a nation as the British, it is a great honour to me, and every wish of my heart

is fulfilled, death will come to me one day, what then have I to fear? But those whom you have taken to your side will on the day fixed turn upon you and kill you. You are wise, but have erred in your wisdom. I sent a letter to Chundernugger but it did not reach, this has disappointed me or you would have seen what I could do I will however still try for Chundernygger.

If you think proper send an answer to this. A wise enemy is better than unwise friend.

D/-17th Rumzan 1275 Hijree

or 20th April 1859

Copy of a reply sent by Major J.F. Richardson Commanding Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry to the Ishtar bearing the seal of the Maharaja of Bithoor. Dated the 17 Rumzan 1275 Hijree.

The Ishtar bearing the seal of the Maharaja of Bithoor sent by the hands of a Brahmin has been received by Major Richardson Commanding European Cavalry who has made himself acquainted with the contents. I now write that the proclamation which was issued by Her Majesty the Queen of England, was not for any one party or person, but for all. And the identical terms under which the Nawab of Furruckabad, the Nawab of Banda and other Chieftains and Rajas of Oudh, laid down their arms and surrendered themselves to Government, those terms are open to you and all those who may wish to surrender. In writing as you do that you have not murdered women and children (Meham our lurken), it becomes you to come in without fear, a reply to this is requested.

Camp Dhukurea
23rd April 1859.

Sd/-J.F. Richardson:
Comm'dg. B.Y.C.

Foreign Political Consultations No. 65, 27 May 1859.

Service Message

From

Mr. Beadon, Calcutta 2nd May

To

The Lieutenant Governor, Allahabad.

The Governor General in Council has received your message of the 30th. He has also received a copy of the Nana's letter and of Major Richardson's reply. He does not approve of that reply, all overtures from the Nana or from any other rebel who has been prescribed or who stands suspected of taking part in murder are to be answered by a simple reference to the Queen's proclamation and by nothing more. Inform Major Richardson by Telegraph that he is not to reply any further letters from the Nana without taking instructions upon them, and that if any are received by him he is to send copies immediately to the local Government and to the Government of India.

Electric Telegraph Deptt.

The 3rd of May 1859.

Foreign Political Consultations, No. 66, 27 May 1859.

From

Brig. H. Rowcroft, Commanding Goruckpore District

To

Major General Birch C.B. Secy, to the Government of India,
in the Military Department in Calcutta.

D/-Goruckpore 7th May 1859.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward the enclosed documents as noted in the margin*, for submission to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India.

*Two native letters original from the Nana and Bala Rao dated 25th and 26th April 1859, with translations.

Copies of the replies sent by Major Richardson Comdg. B.Y. Cavy under the sanction of Coll Pinkey G.B. Commdg. the column.

2. I beg to report that I have sent up orders to Coll. Pinkney not to allow such communications to be carried on and signed by any subordinate officer, but take such matter entirely into his own hands and to keep them from being publicly known in camp as far as possible, obtaining the assistance of Major Richardson or other confidential officer; and, in future on any letter or overtures being received from such rebel chiefs, merely to refer them to Her Majesty the Queen's Proclamation in reply, sending in the native letters without delay, for transmission to Government, informing the parties that their letters have been so forwarded.

I have the honour to be & c.
Sd/-H. Rowcroft Brig.
Commdg. Gorruckpore District.

Foreign Political Consultations No. 67, 27th May, 1859.

Translation of letter from the Nana

Major Richardson in his reply to my Ishtihar received on the 23rd April 1859 has noticed only one of the many subjects contained in it. This I accept but I cannot surrender myself in this manner, if a letter written by Her Majesty the Queen and sealed with her seal and brought by the Commanding Officer of the French ("Francees") or the second in command, reach me, I will, placing reliance on these officers, accept the terms without hesitation. Why should I join you, knowing all the "dagabazi" perpetrated by you in Hindoostan? If you are heartily desirous of putting an end to the troubles of the country, an autograph letter of Her Majesty, brought by the Commanding Officer of the French, I will accept. Some years ago, I sent an Eilchi to London, by whom Her Majesty sent me a letter written with her own hand, and sealed with her own seal. This I have in my possession to this day. If you wish it,

the thing can only be done in this way, and to this I consent. If not, life must be given up some day. Why then should I die dishonoured? There will be war between me and you as long as I have life, whether I be killed or imprisoned or hanged, and whatever I do will be done with the sword only. Nevertheless if Her Majesty's letter as above described comes to me, the thing may be—I will present myself. If you consider it proper, be sure to send me an answer.

D/Deogurh

22nd Ramzan

26th (sic) April 1859.

APPENDIX 'G'

[*Foreign Political Consultation 30th December 1859 No. 542*
National Archives, New Delhi.]

[*The letter of Nana Saheb to Maharajah Jang Bahadur of Nepal.*]

"We have received your letter, we have been hearing the reputation of Nepal at distant places, all along the country. Indeed inspite of my reading the history of many ancient kings of India and seeing the character of many present rulers. I believe that your Majesty's deeds stand matchless. For you did not hesitate to render help even to the British—the very people who have borne every short of ill-will towards your people. And yet, as soon as they asked for help you have rushed to their assistance. There is no limit to this your generosity. Well then shall it be unnatural of me to expect that the descendant of the Peshwas who had all along been friendly towards your people will not be denied help from your Majesty, specially when you have given it so freely to the British who bore avowed enmity towards you? He who admitted the enemy inside will not at least turn his friend out.

It is utterly unnecessary to repeat here the well-known story of the wrongs under which Hindustan is groaning, how the British people have broken treaties, trampled down their promises, snatched away the crowns of the Indian Rajas. It is equally unnecessary to describe how even the religion of the land is threatned as soon as the kingdoms of the land are destroyed. It is too well known. It is for this reason that this war is waged. We are sending Shrimant Bala Saheb, our brother, to you and he will clear up other things personally"%.

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THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hari Prasad Thapliyal hails from Pauri Garhwal in Uttar Pradesh. He studied his law and post-graduation in history from D.A.V. College, Dehra Dun, he started his career as lecturer in history. After going through the annals of Indian history, Dr. Thapliyal came to the conclusion that many British historians have done great injustice to Indian history, in presenting many accounts in a twisted and tormented manner, to suit their colonial interest. This is more evident in Maratha history. Dr. Thapliyal after deep analysis and verifications, wrote the present book in order to give the correct and true picture of Peshwa Nana Rao and his campatriots.

Some of the prominent books written by Dr. Thapliyal are :— (1) Mumtaz Mahal (2) The great National war of 1857 (3) Maharaja Man Singh (4) Rani Padmani of Chittor and (5) Rajnartaki.

Dr. Thapliyal also wrote more-than a dozen of Hindi Novels besides many short stories. His pen-power is full of penetration and deep analysis of human psychology. In all his writings, his picturesque descriptions and panoramic depictions of man's life in his inner and outer world, in a realistic approach, is a distinct feature.



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